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GERMANY AND WESTERN EUROPE

THE breakdown of the Foreign Ministers' Conference has had the paradoxical effect of retarding the plans of each side for the partition of Germany. It is as though four children, having stolen a cake, quarrelled and divided it up, now sat each with his portion in his hand, fearful that the first to put it in his mouth would be accused by the others of the theft.

Yet something must be done, and done quickly, if Western Germany is not to collapse. Already coal production, after a welcome spurt in the autumn, is sagging again, and sullen animosity against the Occupying Powers is on the increase. Only in Berlin, where our conduct can be compared directly with that of the Russians, are we really popular. In Bizonia, the German attitude will be determined entirely by what we achieve during the next twelve months.

The first and most urgent problem is the currency. No economic reconstruction can be attempted without devaluation. The withdrawal of "Bafs" this week is presumably a prelude to the cancellation of all existing Mark notes and their replacement by a new issue at a rate of perhaps 10 or 15 old Marks for each "free" new one. If simultaneously bank deposits are blocked and a regulated rise in prices is permitted, the Black Market may possibly be mopped up and inflation checked. But in that case the "wage stop," a survival from Nazi days, will have to be lifted and the trade unions authorised to negotiate new wage scales throughout industry.

In carrying through a drastic deflation, the greatest care must be taken to avoid the appearance of repeating the fatal errors of 1923 and 1924. Then the seeds of National Socialism were sown, since the middle classes were financially liquidated and owners of real property acquired during the inflation were the beneficiaries of stabilisation. In Russia, currency devaluation can be carried through relatively easily because the State owns the factories and the land. But in Germany, under free enterprise, similar measures would have very different results. The farmer, the factory owner and the Black Marketeer, who has purchased real estate or valuables, will still be well off. As Schumacher has rightly urged, deflation will turn the workers and the professional classes against democracy unless it is accompanied by a capital levy.

We may assume that these financial reforms will be put forward in the first instance at a quadripartite meeting in Berlin. But negotiations cannot be protracted without grave detriment to the Western Powers. We had better assume that Bizonia—or Trizonia—will soon be compelled to have its own Western currency. If the Russians come in, so much the better. But we cannot now afford to wait too long.

The second problem is the form of self-government to be created. Mr. Bevin is, no doubt, unwilling to provoke the accusation that he favours the partition of Germany. He will not therefore propose a full-blown German Government for the Western provinces. On the other hand, he will be heading for trouble if he is content to build on the present tangle of Bizonal committees in Frankfurt. This would be to make confusion worse confounded. What is needed is a firm decision to eradicate "Mil. Gov." altogether and to substitute genuine German self-government, under Allied supervision, for the present divided control which destroys responsibility altogether. Our first impressions of the proposals emerging from the conference of the Commanders-in-Chief at Frankfurt is that they amount to little more than the enlargement of machinery which has already proved inefficient. They seem to preserve the paralysing dualism of German and Allied authority, and do little to solve the difficulty of obstruction by semi-autonomous *Länder*.

No financial or political reforms in Bizonia—even if they are widened to include the French Zone—have any hope of lasting success so long as Western Germany is treated as a special territory, set apart from its neighbours. With or without the Russian Zone, Germany cannot recover except as part of a Western Union. Equally, all plans for collaboration between the Sixteen Nations are futile so long as they exclude Germany or leave it on one side. The German problem is still *the* European problem.

It is for this reason that we are alarmed to observe that the French proposal for the recall of the Paris Conference has been coolly received by the Foreign Office. It would be an irony of history if Mr. Bevin, whose initiative transformed the Harvard Speech into the Marshall Plan, were now to recoil from the consequences of his action and to permit British insularity to be the cause of its collapse. Yet unless the Sixteen Nations, headed by France and Britain, formulate plans immediately for the integration of their own economics with that of Western Germany, the Marshall Plan has no hope of success and French democracy small chance of survival. In that case Western Germany would fall under exclusive American control.

It is tempting to avoid action by proffering the excuse that the uncertainties of Congress preclude a British initiative: history is settled in Washington. But the truth is very different. What happens in Washington will be largely decided by events in London and Paris. If we falter and tumble, Mr. Taft's case for demolishing the Marshall Plan will be proved. If we show a will to fashion our destiny and to defeat the Communist offensive by creating the economic basis for a revival of Western Social Democracy, then not only will America be more ready to help us, but Russia, faced with the *fait accompli* of our renewed strength, may come to terms.

The President's Message

The Message on the "State of the Union" which President Truman delivered to Congress on Wednesday contained a programme which stands little chance of acceptance by the Republican majority, and is clearly designed as the framework for the Democratic platform in this year's Presidential election. So far as domestic issues are concerned, Mr. Truman was evidently out to rally the forces of the New Deal, scattered since Roosevelt's death. Taxation on rising corporate taxes must be increased in order to permit modest income-tax concessions to individuals; the legal minimum wage must be raised from 40 to 75 cents an hour; there must be a large-range programme of federal housing; unemployment

benefits, old age pensions and comprehensive health insurance must be enacted; and the Administration must not be denied "the weapons desperately needed to fight inflation." Will this party speech break the bi-partisan support for the Marshall Plan, for which Mr. Truman requests a $6.8 billion allocation for the first fifteen months? The attempt to combine unanimity on foreign affairs with a domestic wrangle may fail, but its failure would not be avoided by Truman's surrender at home. Meanwhile, the allocations under the European Recovery Programme outlined this week by the State Department follow broadly the lines of the Harriman Report. The Paris Conference demands for steel are severely cut, and emphasis is placed on relief shipments of food, petrol and tobacco. They raise one very awkward problem for Britain by cutting her grain allocation to allow for wheat bought from Canada. But Britain has been relying on U.S. dollars with which to buy this wheat.

M. Schuman Reprieved

M. Schuman undoubtedly owes thanks to General de Gaulle for his success in obtaining (albeit by narrow margins) five votes of confidence from the Assembly. In his week-end speech at St. Etienne, the General left no room for doubt that a vote for the R.P.F. would mean a vote for a Corporate State; and even M. Reynaud was evidently not prepared, at this juncture, to see the Schuman Government overthrown in the General's favour. But, though the Mayer Plan of financial reform is now safely on the statute book, the Government is clearly by no means at the end of its difficulties. The C.G.T. is already arguing that the increases which have taken effect this month in a wide range of consumers' goods have already gone far to nullify the increase conceded in the minimum wage, and that further wage revisions will be required to defend the workers' standard of living. If Interim Aid shipments of American food arrive on a scale sufficient to enable the Government to bring down the price-level of domestic farm produce, it may be possible to resist further progress of the inflationary spiral. But the proviso is a big one; and the wave of protests by farmers, shopkeepers and professional men at M. Mayer's super-tax suggests that the Treasury will be lucky if it secures the revenue estimated from this source.

Britain's Sterling Debts

Since sales of gold in December, combined with the draft on the now released "frozen" balance of the 1946 Dollar Loan, indicate that Britain's hard currency deficit is still running at the alarming rate of £600 millions a year, it is a matter of some consequence how far the current revision of agreements with Egypt and India on short-term payments is likely to increase the strain on our balance of payments. So far as the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, which was signed in Cairo on Monday, is concerned, Britain gets off fairly cheaply. Egypt's sterling holdings, which have now been reduced from a peak of £440 millions to about £350 millions, are to continue to be blocked, with the exception that she will be entitled in 1948 to draw £32 millions for the purchase of British goods and a further £6 millions for conversion into dollars which she can spend in the hard currency area. The discussions with India and Pakistan are likely to present a more difficult problem. Under the agreement covering 1947, the two Dominions combined were allowed to convert up to £65 millions of their sterling balances into dollars or other hard currencies. The Treasury will doubtless be reluctant to agree to further releases of convertible sterling on this scale—especially since supplies of Argentine foodstuffs may have to be paid for in "free" sterling as soon as Argentina's sterling balances amount (as they soon will) to the £150 millions required to pay for the British-owned railways. India and Pakistan, on the other hand, are both suffering from dollar famine, and are in urgent need of capital goods which Britain is not in a position to deliver quickly. Some hard bargaining seems likely.

Strengthening the Lords

The news that a committee of Tory peers has been devising proposals for a reformed House of Lords indicates that the peers are not prepared to be put in the position of throwing out the Parliament Bill, without at the same time suggesting that they have a better scheme of their own. The danger in any scheme emanating from such a source is that it would inevitably aim at leaving the Party structure weighted in favour of the Conservatives, however much it might seem to have been modified. To reduce the size of the House of Lords to 300, one hundred of whom would be hereditary peers selected for long public service, one hundred Labour representatives, and the remainder non-Party experts, looks, on paper, to be a satisfactory arrangement. In practice, the Conservatives would be able to count on a higher proportion of the votes of the unattached members than would the Labour Party. As the reformed Chamber would have the colour of being a streamlined and up-to-date version of the old, it would not lack the courage to use its powers of veto, and so embarrass a Labour Government far more than the present Chamber does. If two-Chamber government is to be continued, the only feasible plan of reform would be so to adjust the Lords as to make it reflect the electoral position in the country after each General Election. In default of that, the present system of obviously unequal representation is preferable to any other scheme, provided that the Lords' claws are cut so drastically as to be made inoperative. So long as it is clear to the country that the Lords cannot make claim accurately to reflect public opinion, they will not dare to go far in hindering a Labour Government's legislation. In these circumstances the reduction of the veto period to one year is probably the most effective safeguard.

The Communists and the Unions

Despite recent circulars issued by Mr. Morgan Phillips from the Labour Party end of Transport House, there is no real indication that an anti-Communist witch-hunt is beginning in the British Trade Union movement. It is natural enough that there should be in many unions a struggle for office between candidates standing for Communist and anti-Communist tendencies, and that this struggle should be somewhat intensified by the Communist Parties' stiffened line in Western Europe. The British Communists, however, seem so far to have been careful not to put themselves in outright opposition to the production drive—quite explicitly in the case of the miners, though less clearly elsewhere; and as long as they continue to support the Government on this issue, despite their opposition to the Marshall Plan, it would be most unwise for the unions' leadership to start a campaign which would be almost certain to hamper production, even if it met with a large measure of success. The quarrel in the Civil Service Clerical Association, of which much is being made, is a special affair—mixed up, as it is, with the dispute between Mr. W. J. Brown and the present leaders of the Association. Even if a witch-hunt develops in the C.S.C.A., that is no reason why it should be expected to spread. What is probable is a struggle over a fairly wide area for influence on the local Trades Councils, on many of which Communists and fellow-travellers hold points of vantage. In this field the Communists are quite likely to lose ground in view of recent developments; but that does not mean that the British trade unions are heading for any sort of split.

The Cost of Air Transport

The Tory press is making the most of the gigantic losses incurred by B.O.A.C. Though it is true enough, it is not sufficient to reply that all the American aviation companies, with one exception, have suffered heavy losses in the same period. The B.O.A.C. report indicates clearly enough a crisis which demands decision at the highest level. Moreover, it is obvious from the example of the Dutch K.L.M., which has shown a profit over the same period, that an air line which is free to purchase the best machines in the best market, irrespective of nationality, has a huge advantage. K.L.M. does well partly because there is no civil or military aircraft manufacture in Holland. B.O.A.C., on the other hand, must gear its policy not merely to Commonwealth needs and to routes which are often unremunerative, but to the requirements of the British aircraft industry and, to a lesser extent, of the R.A.F. for the development of transport planes. How far should such extraneous considerations be permitted to prevent business efficiency in nationalised civil aviation? This issue is raised in acute form by the dispute over the Tudor aircraft. It is ridiculous for the Tories to point to B.O.A.C. losses as proofs of mismanagement in a nationalised industry. But it is legitimate to complain that the Government has never given a clear directive on the relations between the efficient development of civil aviation and the aircraft industry, and the requirements of the R.A.F.

Scientists and Production

The Government is calling in the wartime scientists to help to increase the productivity of British industry. For months the leading "Boffins" have been pressing for a "crisis-mobilisation." Sir Henry Tizard, who is the chairman of the committee which the British Association set up in response to their demand to consider how scientists could best serve, has been given the opportunity of putting them to work. To his existing posts as head of the Government's Scientific Defence Committee and of the civil Scientific Advisory Council, he has added the chairmanship of the Committee on Industrial Productivity, which is backed by Mr. Morrison and Sir Stafford Cripps. Working parties have been established on human factors in industry, import substitutes, technical information and technology and operational research. Operational Research was the method developed during the war by which scientific analysis, as used by the natural scientists, was applied to complex organisational, operational and social problems of the Services. The scientists believe that by the same sort of approach to the problems of industry they can substantially increase production even with existing manpower and material resources.

Forgotten Men

The pre-war bomb exploits of the I.R.A. in England might well be forgotten, but for the fact that 28 men are still serving long gaol sentences at Parkhurst for their connection with them. Their average age is 30. When they first went to prison it was 22. Most of them received sentences of 20 years apiece, although no lives were lost as a result of their activities. Nobody would wish to condone deeds of violence for political ends under any circumstances. But these men were youthful hotheads and those who visit them now are convinced that they would never again resort to such methods. Surely eight years is enough to have taken out of their lives at a time when Grandi can be acquitted of responsibility for furthering Fascism and stimulating the arrival of the war. At the end of 1946, the Northern Ireland Government, not noted for its sympathy towards anti-Partitionists, released 16 men, similarly imprisoned, under a Christmas amnesty. Under our processes of law the cases of the Parkhurst prisoners are not due to be reviewed until 1951 unless the Home Secretary takes special action. Mr. Chuter Ede, we suggest, might well decide to relax the vengeance of the law, which by this time must have had its fill, and sufficiently depart from conventional practice as to return these young men to their homes in Ireland before they become permanently embittered.

UNCLE SAM'S POOR RELATIONS

WESTERN Europeans are to-day beggars round the richly furnished board of Uncle Sam, who is taking a good look at our behaviour before making up his mind what to give us to carry on with, and how far some of us can be helped to earn our own livings. He is not unmindful of the fact that even poor relations can at times be useful. There are many things he wants done but does not care to undertake himself; and some that he cannot get done without paying for them. He is not an ungenerous fellow by nature, and he has so much money that he is sometimes puzzled how to get rid of it. But he made his money by attending to the main chance; and it would be too much to expect him not to carry his business instincts into the spending of it.

The great thing for the nations of Europe, in responding to the Marshall offer now embodied in President Truman's draft European Recovery Act, is not to repeat the mutual jealousies and manœuvrings of the poor relations of fiction, but to act together, in the hope that each will get something like his fair share. That is not only the dignified course; it is also the course that is much the most likely to lead to real recovery, and to the creation in Europe of a state of affairs in which the peoples can live well without further sponging. By acting together, and creating common institutions to handle as many as possible of the problems arising in connection with American aid—both now, while it is under negotiation, and later, when the Plan is in force—the recipients may be able to keep down to a minimum American intervention in their several national concerns, as well as to put whatever they are given to the best productive use. They will certainly be able to avoid bidding up prices one against another in the American markets, which is perhaps the greatest immediate danger of all. They may also be able to avoid having conditions laid on them one by one, against their common view of what is desirable, or even practicable for them to carry out. They will be able, furthermore, to use American aid as a means to much needed common planning of their own production, and of the mutual exchanges based upon it. And, finally, they will be able to assert themselves as not mere satellites of American power, corresponding to the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe, but as a "Third Force" in world economics, as well as in politics, with a will and a standpoint of their own.

All this, of course, assumes that the European Recovery Bill is going through Congress in a form which all or most of the Sixteen Nations will feel able to accept. Many of the dangers are obvious. Already Mr. Truman has had to drop from the Bill the figure originally proposed for the four-year period. There is a danger of the appropriations and even of the broad authorisations being so cut as to reduce the Bill to a mere relief measure, wholly insufficient as a basis of recovery; there is the danger of "strings" being attached to it—such as making all money provided spendable only on American goods; and there is the danger of Congress insisting on more interference in the internal affairs of the aided countries than the draft appears to contemplate. The fact remains that the draft Bill, as it now stands, is a good deal better than most of us ventured to hope, though we need further enlightenment as to the use which must be made of revenue collected in local currencies against relief goods, and it is not quite clear how far the role of the Import-Export Bank is to tie us to the American market. There are, however, on the face of the matter, no political conditions. The draft is a good draft, though inevitably it leaves much to depend on the spirit in which it is to be administered, when and if it becomes law.

For the moment, let us take the draft as it is, rather than start guessing what it may be by the time Congress has done with it. If Mr. Truman's proposals stand, there is, to begin with, not the smallest doubt that we ought to accept the proffered aid. There is no such question of entering into impossible financial obligations as arose in connection with the American Loan. Nor can it be left out of account that we are infinitely worse placed for facing the consequences of refusing aid than we were two years ago, if only because we have exhausted our credit in Canada, which cannot afford to go on supplying us unless we can meet the bill largely in dollars. Only if we were confronted with really intolerable conditions could we refuse aid—and, unless the conditions were politically as well as financially harsh, we might have to accept all the same, after stating plainly our view that the terms could not be implemented in fact. With the draft Bill as it is, the chief doubt that arises is about the way in which the resident "ambassador" in Europe will interpret his powers, and about the intended content of the agreements that the U.S. Secretary of State is to negotiate with some or all of the participating countries. It will clearly matter a great deal who are appointed under the Bill, if it passes in its present form, as "administrator" and as "ambassador" in Europe, and who holds the big post of Secretary of State—for the whole plan is to be subject to his final authority in all matters affecting the foreign policy of the United States. That must mean much: it might, in the wrong hands, mean all too much.

Fears are emotions no borrower unsure of his future can help feeling; for creditors have an even worse literary reputation than poor relations. But it must be said that our would-be creditor at present does not look grasping, at any rate in the strictly financial sense. The provisions about treating payments for most raw materials as well as for foods as grants and not loans are generous, provided that the powers conferred by the provisions for payment into blocked local currency accounts are not stretched into restrictions on national policies. On the financial side, indeed, the Bill contrasts most favourably with the Loan terms of two years ago. The limits on Europe's ability to pay have been frankly recognised; and the proposal that raw materials should be delivered free by recipients of aid to the American "stockpile" has been dropped, in the consciousness, evidently, that it must have gone far to wreck the whole plan.

Most welcome is the absence of explicit provisions imposing limitations on European trade policy. This whole question, of course, is under negotiation at Havana to-day, and has been partly settled, on an interim basis, by the Geneva General Tariff Agreement. But the chance offered by the Marshall Plan might have been exploited—as the chance of the loan to Great Britain was in 1945—as a means for exacting impracticable provisions about trade and currency. It is a good sign that this has not been done, apart from the general provision in the Bill about currency stabilisation, which is in any case binding in due course under the Bretton Woods Plan.

On the whole, then, President Truman's Bill is reassuring; and we can set out to watch with hopeful anxiety its progress through the obstructions which it is now bound to meet. We do not make the mistake of supposing that it is all plain generosity, or that its chances of getting through are not immensely improved by the possibility of representing it, in America, as part of the great anti-Communist crusade. We, however, do not have to take it in that spirit; indeed, we should avoid looking the gift horse right down its throat. Most of all, however, should Great Britain avoid simply sitting still and watching till Congress has done—whatever it may decide to do. The European countries can most favourably influence the proceedings in Congress by getting together now and working out their own constructive proposals, not only for handling the aid when it comes, but also for making it part of a wider common plan, or series of plans, for a real effort at recovery.

Merely to go on talking about a hypothetical Customs Union, which nobody expects to come for a long time, if at all, is not nearly enough. Tariffs matter; but planning matters infinitely more—planning of specialised production of complementary products; planning of combined buying, and perhaps selling, agencies; planning for Germany—that is, for the working-in of the German economy with that of the rest of Europe; and planning for the development of trade across the political barriers between East and West. These things must be done now, not left to be done in a scurry, if and when the European Recovery Bill has become law; and it rests upon the British Government urgently to give the right lead.

SUNRISE IN BURMA

Rangoon, January 5

A FAMOUS nineteenth-century Viceroy once pointed to heaven and said that, as long as the sun shone, so would the British flag fly over Burma. To-day, fifty years after Burma first attained the status of a Province under a Lieutenant-General, the British flag has ceased to fly over Burma; but never until now, as the British and Burmese agree, have the two nations achieved genuine friendship.

Yesterday's celebrations began at 04.20—the time shown according to the Burmese press to be astrologically the most appropriate. First, at the Burmese Secretariat, and then at Government House, in the presence of British and Burmese troops, who marched past Sir Hubert Rance and the new President of Burma standing side by side, a mixed crowd of Burmans and British watched the flag of the Union of Burma hoisted in place of the Union Jack. The ceremonies were carried out with dignity and grace, and in an atmosphere of cordiality that is hard to convey on paper. Indeed, throughout the day the most impressive thing was the elaboration and perfection of detailed arrangement combined with pleasant informality. As we left Government House an Englishman with a long record in Burma remarked that it was much the happiest visit he had ever paid there.

A foreign delegate said that he had discovered that, after all, the British could behave very graciously. It is a change for us in Burma, where, with a mixture of devotion and arrogant folly, we have ruled but never been welcome. One of our outstanding follies was the inclusion of Burma in our administration of India, though Burma is a proud Buddhist civilisation which, for a thousand years before the British came, had had little contact with India. A second more recent folly was our attempt immediately after the war to ignore the revolutionary spirit of new Burma and to reimpose the old type of British rule and business interests. That way would have spelt disaster. If the attempt had been continued, Britain would now be fighting a savage war in Burma with even less chance of saving their property or prestige than the French have in Indo-China or the Dutch in Indonesia. All the British officials that I have spoken to agree that the Labour Government has done the right thing, and that the present Burmese Government is ready to behave fairly to British interests and acknowledges its need of British technical skill and capital equipment. Of course, there are some in Burma who, for that very reason, are suspicious of the treaty. But the auspices to-day favour a future in which the Socialist Burma envisaged in the new Constitution will maintain trade co-operation and good relations with other countries and especially Britain.

The only outspoken critics of the treaty are the Communists, whose spokesman yesterday opened a discussion in the Burmese Parliament with an attack on the settlement with the British. But the Communists in the country are not now strong. They have been badly led and missed their opportunity. The British withdrawal has

removed their principal propaganda weapon, and trouble in central Burma (which has been much exaggerated in the American press) has now largely ended, while the Government claims now also to be in full control in Arakan. The Government has immense problems to face, economic and political. These do not, as some have suggested, arise from any differences between constituent members of the Union. The Constitution deals ingeniously and successfully with the task of bringing the Shans and Karens into union, without sacrificing their demands for autonomy. Economically the reconstruction of devastated Burma can only be carried out on a Socialist pattern adjusted to the peculiar needs of this religious and individualistic peasant people. Politically Burma is still troubled by political and personal feuds, and it may be some years before the Government can expect a full response to the appeal made by Premier Thakin Nu for national unity and continuous work in rebuilding the new Burma.

Credit for the dignified and friendly atmosphere of the British withdrawal belongs both to British and to Burmans. A very special tribute must be paid to Sir Hubert Rance, who is certainly more respected and indeed loved than any former Governor of Burma. It would be easy to make the wisecrack that the last British Governor was bound to be the most popular since nothing, in Burmese eyes, could so become a Governor as to be the last. But Rance's popularity is far deeper and more remarkable. I listened to his farewell speech at a State banquet where, in blunt, soldierly terms, he criticised the Burmese character and delivered a homily about Burma's future. As the Burmese are highly sensitive, I asked Burmese friends whether such a speech made in public, on what would usually be regarded as a purely ceremonial occasion, was altogether acceptable to them. They replied with unanimity that, since they all loved Rance, they would listen gladly to any criticism from him. The speech was a great success. They had given Rance their hearts and he could say what he liked.

There was no doubt at all about the sincerity of their feeling towards the last British Governor when we stood in a crowd at the jetty and watched his departure on H.M.S. *Birmingham*. At night, after a day of official celebrations, we sought the by-roads of Rangoon to see how the populace were celebrating this unique jubilee. It was a night of rejoicing but not of excitement. No one was drunk, but everyone seemed happy. The Burmese are seldom drunk, and nothing is so remarkable about them in the world to-day as that they seem always to be happy. A large crowd was uproariously excited at a film dating from the 'twenties, thrown by a hand-turned projector on a screen hitched to the wall of a shop. I was back in my childhood days watching the silent but never deadly fighting, the wild chase in motor cars ending up on horseback, and the triumph—I'm sure of it, though I did not see the end—of virtue over evil. Then we drank coffee and watched a dancing girl whose elaborate and stylised movements were performed in a long trailing skirt of the Burmese Victorian period. The crowd, squatting on mats in front of the stage, showed their approval—since clapping is uncommon in Burma—mainly by loud laughter at the jests and horseplay of two clowns who were the dancer's foils. Later still, we took our places in the audience at an open-air puppet show, in which once again the exquisite craftsmanship of the puppets and the elaboration of the traditional story contrasted delightfully with the informality of the showmen, who had no objection to their hands appearing on the stage, and who laughed loudly as they themselves told the story and sang the puppets' songs.

All this gaiety and colour—for the colour of a Burmese crowd, with its exquisite and brilliant dress, and constant splashes of saffron-robed monks is staggering—tells one nothing, of course, about the political meaning of this day for the masses of Burma. The best clue I have to that was a series of crudely executed paintings on the walls of a bazaar. They showed the Burmese fighting, first, the British, then the Japanese, and Aung San emerging as a hero and warning the British—represented by faces which we guessed were intended to be those of Attlee and Cripps—that Burma demanded complete independence, and receiving an assurance from the masses that they would fight for it and for Burma if Britain refused. The sequel was not painted. There was no reason to paint it. It was brilliantly painted before our eyes in the jollifications themselves. The Burmans were celebrating the withdrawal of the British. We were proud to share in this celebration. KINGSLEY MARTIN

PARLIAMENT AND FILM MONOPOLISTS

DOLLARS, as cigarette smokers and motor car users have discovered, could hardly be scarcer; yet cinema-goers buy only 15 per cent. home produce and are still spending dollars at the rate of £15 millions a year on films imported from America. That ratio will not be much affected by the 75 per cent. tax until April, when the stock of American pre-duty films runs down. By then it is likely that some arrangement will have been made with the U.S.A., and Britain's cinema-goers will be able once again, though not so freely, to spend dollars on new American films. They will be restricted in the immediate future by the Treasury determination not to incur a dead loss annually of more than £4½ millions.

The Government, as part of its long-term campaign to conserve dollars, and irrespective of the emergency tax, is trying to solve the mystery of why we don't see more British films, and to correct the adverse balance. Hence the new Films Bill. The problem of stimulating the home industry is not merely, as most people imagine, one of getting more studio space, but of dealing with the methods of distribution and exhibition which have combined to keep British films off the screen. Later it may also become one of combating the restrictive practices on the increase among film trade unions. In part, the new measure succeeds in its objective, but it fails to guarantee the independent producer freedom from the bondage that other people's finance has laid on him. The Bill is phrased in terms as complicated as the evils it is aimed at. It must be viewed against the background which gave birth to it.

In 1946 British cinemas paid £26 millions to hire the films they showed. After the deduction of expenses connected with distribution, £18½ millions was the amount left for the film companies, of which less than £2 millions went to British companies. That was not because American films are that much superior to ours, or because British films were insufficient in quantity to fill up any more screen space. It was largely due to the ramifications of an industry which is the epitome of capitalism gone mad, to the detriment of its native country.

Out of 4,500 cinemas, a great proportion of which are flea-pits or hardly better, 1,000 are in the hands of two groups, A.B.C. and the Rank organisation, which controls Odeon and Gaumont-British. Between them these two groups, owning the majority of the best cinemas, take three-fifths of the country's total box office receipts. Theoretically, they could buy their films from any source; practically, the financial agreements they have entered into hamper and confine their choice.

A.B.C. are controlled by Warners, who in return for U.S.A. concessions show M.G.M. films here. Both these American film companies have first claim on the playing time of the 425 A.B.C. theatres. Good, bad, or indifferent their films are shown for 34 weeks of the year. The few weeks left are divided between British and other American films. Rank, the great film producer, is not so badly committed, but even he is subject to American influence. United Artists have an extremely strong holding in the Odeon Holding Company. 20th Century Fox have a substantial share in Gaumont-British, and Rank must show all their films. Paramount own six large theatres in this country—leased to the Odeon Group. Finally, Rank owns shares in Universal and understandably feels an obligation to show their films.

In their booking methods the two circuits adopt the normal friendly approach of monopolies. Often, if one circuit books a film, no one else will have it—ever. If you live in St. Albans you will never see *A Man About the House* locally. Rank owns the cinemas and A.B.C. have bough the film. In Oxford, A.B.C. own the cinemas and that cuts out the Rank films, unless the financiers have decided on some interchange arrangement. In areas where the two big circuits are not operating, smaller circuits, like Granada and Shipman and Kings, get the exclusive rights. Anyone unfortunate enough to own a solitary cinema in a district covered by a circuit gets the films that are too bad even for Rank or A.B.C. or one of the other circuits.

Apart from the consumers of the goods, who frequently see only what the financial tie-ups will let them see, the worst sufferers have been the British film industry as a whole, particularly the independent producers. If Rank makes twenty-five films in a year, his natural inclination will be to give them priority in the amount of time devoted to British pictures at his cinemas. Although many of his films are good, the knowledge that anything made can be sold is bound, in the long run, to lead to careless and shoddy work. Signs of just such a trend are already visible. The position of an independent producer in these conditions has been made almost impossible. To be able to produce a worth-while film (and by and large the better films cost more money) he must be sure of getting one of the two big circuits to book it, otherwise the return will not meet his outlay. In opposition to twenty-five or more Rank films in a year, the chance of getting a film taken by the Odeon group is thin. The only hope has been to struggle for a place in the queue for the few available weeks on the A.B.C. circuit. It is a hope that has not inspired much confidence. Gradually the independent producers have been absorbed, leaving, of the larger ones, only the exceptionally tough Ealing Studios and London Film Productions; and even the former is now closely linked with the Rank Organisation.

The Government's answer, apart from the 75 per cent. tax, to the threat from America is the new Films Bill, due for debate after the Recess. The old quota system of the 1938 Act provided that so many feet of British films had to be shown each year. That was easy for Hollywood, who, with their willing British friends, sponsored the making of cheap, bad films in England, showed them at the hours when the theatres were nearly empty, and wrote off their cost against the profits from showing their own films at the peak periods. In the process, the British industry was conveniently discredited in the minds of the public as incapable of producing a decent film.

This time the rules are more stringent. There are to be two quotas—one for first features and the other for supporting films. A first feature is defined as the only long film shown in the programme, or as the film carrying the biggest rental if there is more than one long film. The quota period is based on six months instead of a year, and, to count towards the quota, a film must be shown between 5 and 10 p.m. Again, for first features the percentage is fixed on the number of days shown and not on the number of times, although supporting films are still registered in feet.

The quota percentages are not stated in the Bill. They will be settled, as occasion demands, by the Board of Trade after consultation with the Films Council, representing the industry, and will presumably depend on the varying output capacities of the British companies. As the Rank companies, together with Ealing Studios, could easily make 25 first feature films a year, and Korda's London Films another twelve, a start-

ing minimum quota of 50 per cent. for first features would not be too high. Supporting films in the first instance will have to be based rather lower; but if there is any error in fixing both quotas, it is better that the mistake should be on the high side. The worst that can happen is for programmes to be shorter, twice weekly changes abandoned, and, possibly, some cinemas closed down.

This part of the Bill will be of immense help to British films, do away with many foreign commitments for which there is no adequate reciprocation, and save millions of dollars. Its first effect will be to enable any existing independent producer, who makes good films, to dispose of them. But the attempt to deal with the circuits which, despite the new Act, will ultimately menace the consumer, the independent producer and the health of the industry (as they have done up till now) is ludicrously inept. That the Government recognises there is a danger from them is clear from two provisions in the Bill. One, that circuits of more than 200 theatres will have a higher quota to fulfil and must include in it yearly six films made by independent producers. Two, that the Board of Trade may refuse a licence for any further theatres acquired by circuits already owning more than 200 cinemas. The drawbacks to both these provisions are considerable. The two big groups had already agreed to take six independent films before the Bill was published. Six in a year is far too small a number to assure a long-term future for independent producers. At the very least the number should have been added to the quota and not included in it. Nor does the authority to refuse licences for additional theatres do anything other than stabilise the *status quo*. The independent producers, and the public, will not escape the dictates of the power groups, which can, if they choose—and there is nothing in their past to indicate that they will not so choose—show more and more films of their own sponsoring to meet their quota, so excluding films from all other companies except the yearly six imposed on them by law. Such a number is not nearly high enough to stimulate the emergence of new producers.

In Denmark no one may own more than one cinema, and no one connected with the production or distribution of films may own one at all. That might be too drastic an innovation at this stage, and would certainly curtail the Rank organisation in its production programme; but the Board of Trade has been pusillanimous in allowing the circuits to retain their gargantuan size. It would have been a simple matter to make it illegal for a circuit to control more than, say, fifty theatres. It is not too late now. That way ideas would be liberated and the public, not the financiers, would determine their popularity.

Alternatively, the Government might prefer a model from an impeccable capitalist source—the American "Consent Decree." This decree, the legality of which is now in dispute, requires that every film should be offered to the highest bidder in each town and district, if any cinema in the locality which is capable of justifying its bid demands such action. A clause with a similar purpose in our Films Bill would break down some of the worst aspects of monopoly control and widen the potential outlet for independent producers, as well as allowing independent cinemas to compete with the circuits.

Much has been said by Labour Members about Press monopoly and the present Royal Commission is the result. There is a far worse monopoly in the films. That monopoly, if it is not curbed, will stifle a growing art of which Britain is potentially the greatest exponent, and rob us of an incipiently considerable export trade. The Government has caught a glimmering of the vices that beset the industry, and it has tackled some of them. It should now display sufficient courage to investigate them thoroughly and to stamp them all out. It would be child's play compared with the difficulty of nationalising transport or the mines. WOODROW WYATT

A LONDON DIARY

SOME people have complained that the Prime Minister's broadcast last Saturday was too difficult. I found it the best he has ever delivered, and I do not believe that it was over the heads of his audience. He stated a reasoned case for British Socialism—and implicitly for the Third Force—which for the first time got away from catch phrases about the middle way. I am glad that he emphasised that a Socialist Britain will not be a half-way house between American capitalism and Russian Communism, but an organic development of Western European civilisation. The issue to-day is how we can preserve this way of a life in a world dominated by two non-European Powers. Mr. Attlee was surely right in frankly telling his American audience that what we are aiming at is not merely the American way of life a little watered down. But he avoided the danger of adopting an unreal symmetrical impartiality between the rival ideologies. As he stressed, the dangers from the Communists are all positive. On the other hand, the problem of dealing with the Americans is precisely their inability to achieve a consistent and coherent policy. Their practice of democracy makes their foreign policy flabby and unpredictable, whereas the Communists are calculably rigid and yield only to a calculated application of force. Those newspapers which headlined the anti-Communist passages entirely destroyed the point of the broadcast, which was to emphasise, by comparison with America and Russia, the positive role of British Socialism in the post-war world.

* * *

Naturally enough, Mr. Attlee was careful to avoid drawing any political conclusions from his analysis. A Saturday postscript is not the place for a declaration of Government policy. But the logic of his argument and of the speech which Morgan Phillips, delivered last Monday at Birmingham leads clearly enough to a British initiative designed to create the Western European framework within which we can achieve the objectives of Parliamentary Socialism. I gather that Mr. Bevin is to open the foreign affairs debate in the first week of the new session with a really important speech, and that Mr. Churchill will reply for the Opposition. Apart from his many other activities at Marrakesh, he has been brooding over his notion of a United Europe, and I would not be surprised if he proposes far-reaching measures of political integration. In this campaign, he is now believed to have the support of Mr. Eden and Mr. Butler, who were always suspicious of the exclusive Anglo-Americanism of the Fulton speech, and maintained the traditional Conservative stress on Anglo-French relations. Who will go further in their support for Western Union, Mr. Bevin or Mr. Churchill? And how far will the Socialist and the Conservative ideas of joint European planning coincide? Comparing Mr. Attlee's broadcast with Mr. Churchill's Zurich speech, I think the differences will be substantial. Mr. Churchill, like General de Gaulle and Mr. Vandenberg, is chiefly concerned to create a force strong enough to check the "Mongolian hordes." Economics have never been his strong point, and he is most unlikely to accept the Socialist argument that Britain's economic future depends on joint planning of all Western European heavy industries. The best thing that could happen in the debate would be for the differences between the parties about home affairs to be transferred to the European level. There must be real national unity on the need for a Western Union if it is to become a reality. But equally, there should be disagreement on the way to carry it out, and determination on the part of the Government that its Socialist ideas shall prevail.

* * *

I have always looked forward with some trepidation to the Honours List of a Labour Government. The Socialist purist should probably condemn all honours, but in real life there is no place for the purist. The Government is certainly to be congratulated on its latest distribution of honours, particularly to art and letters. If the artist must have a ribbon to stick in his coat or her dress, no better coat could have been chosen for the O.M. than Mr. Eliot's or better dress for the C.H. than Miss Sackville-West's. Since the death of Yeats, Mr. Eliot has stood as a poet head and shoulders above his contemporaries. Yet to put him with Kipling and Barrie in the Order of Merit required imagination, and perhaps courage. No one who remembers the anger and contempt with which academic respectability a quarter of a century ago received the slim, brightly covered *Poems* and then *The Waste Land*, when they were published by The Hogarth Press, could have dreamed at the time that respectability would confer upon the author the highest of its honours. Like Wagner, Cézanne, the Galilaean, and many other revolutionists, Mr. Eliot, after much abuse and derision, has conquered; yet one cannot help wondering whether the O.M. has been given to the author of *The Hippopotamus, Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service*, and *The Waste Land*, or to the author of *After Lambeth*. Miss Sackville-West confers upon the Companionship of Honour as great distinction as Mr. Eliot upon the Order of Merit. As a writer, she has never been a revolutionary, but she is a real poet in the central stream of English tradition. Like *The Waste Land*, *The Land* (in its very different way, which is indicated by the absence of the adjective) has stood up to the test of time, and will continue to do so. And the two best of her novels, *The Edwardians* and *All Passion Spent*, though they have weaknesses not evident in her poetry, are remarkable books. There is a peculiar modesty and integrity in all Miss Sackville-West's work which is as rare as it is refreshing.

* * *

Mass-Observation have sent me some interesting material they collected before nomination day at Gravesend. It appears that the feeling of the electorate at that time fully justified the optimism at Conservative headquarters and the apprehensions at Transport House. Four hundred interviews were recorded; they reflected exactly the percentages which had voted Labour and Conservative in 1945, although those who were prepared to admit to having voted Liberal amounted to only half the Liberal General Election vote. The sample revealed that, before nomination day, 44 per cent. intended to vote Conservative and only 39 per cent. Labour, which would have given the Tories a comfortable victory. Defections from Labour, rather than transference of the Liberal vote, accounted for the change. Thirteen out of twenty old Labour supporters proposing to alter their allegiance gave as their reason that they were disappointed, and three out of twenty gave the blank answer that all Government M.P.s dread, "we need a change." None of them thought of changing because they preferred the Conservative policy. That, no doubt, was why an efficient Labour organisation was able to bring the waverers back into the fold with an intensive propaganda campaign on positive lines.

* * *

Once in a blue moon, one sees a blue moon; and if it coincides with the Christmas festivities, one hastily consults a medical man. If that medical man happens also to be an astronomer, like Dr. W. H. Steavenson, Gresham Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge, he will be reassuring; if not, he will probably recommend a liver lotion and membership of "Alcoholics Anonymous." There is, however, no doubt that thousands of credible and, as far as one knows, abstemious witnesses did in fact see a blue moon on December 20th and during Christmas week. Some, like Lord Balfour of Burleigh, saw it in Scotland; others saw it in Wales, in Cornwall, in Essex and in Lancashire. (Naturally, Lancashire had to be different; there it was green.) And lots of them, convinced of the evidence of their own eyes, wrote to the newspapers and risked the ridicule of their friends. They were quite right. As far as their eyes were concerned, the moon was blue or green. As Prof. Steavenson pointed out in *The Times*, it was a physiological

effect. There had been a particularly vivid red sunset, with the moon rising in juxtaposition. The sunset's assault on the eye "saturated" its red-sensitivity so that it could not absorb the red in the spectrum of the white light of the moon. So the blue (or Lancashire green) of the spectrum became dominant and the moon looked blue.

POLYCRITIC

THE FUMBLIES

[The Government has acquiesced in the view of the T.U.C. that wages policy must be left to the Unions.—*News Item.*]

THEY went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve with the T.U.C.
In spite of all *The Times* could say,
With the T.U.C. they sailed away,
As happy, as happy could be!
And when the Sieve spun round and round,
They called aloud "We can't be drowned,
Our Sieve ain't shipshape, our Sieve ain't big,
But we don't give a cuss! and we don't care a fig!
In a Sieve we'll go to sea!"

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Fumblies live;
Their hearts are soft, and their heads are too,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in:
So to keep them dry they wrapped their feet
In a clean White Paper all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
The storm blew up and the wind was bleak,
And they guessed the Sieve had sprung a leak,
But whenever the Fumblies tried to bail,
The T.U.C. sat down on the pail,
So they all got soaked to the skin.

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Fumblies live,
The skipper gave up his command to the crew,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of those printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

An Army Cadet Corps recruiting poster at Market Harborough, Leicestershire, said: "Each year we spend a cheap week's holiday at camp which combines training with 'wine, women, and song.' Free Churchmen and a magistrate protested . . . So yesterday "wine, women and song" became "pleasure and sport."—*Daily Express.* (J. Ebling.)

A.B., late captain of the Indian Army, told by a magistrate yesterday to . . . go down a coal mine, last night spread out his long white hands for my inspection. "These hands never did a hard day's work in their lives," he told me. "They are the hands of a gentleman."—*Daily Mail.* (C. Sansom.)

A number of firms managed to increase production still further by organising an evening shift from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on five nights per week. This shift is proving very popular amongst married women whose husbands are at home in the evening.—*Manchester Guardian.* (M. W. Flinn.)

To cushion the impact of post-war shopping problems, long-term women prisoners at Holloway and Aylesbury Gaols, due for release, have been taken on specially conducted shopping expeditions and have been trained in the use of ration books.—*Liverpool Daily Post.* (Mrs. M. Brown.)

A few minutes before eight o'clock every night Albert Filer climbs into the bell tower of the 11th-century church at Slaidburn, Yorks, rings a few peals on the bells, then sounds the curfew. He doesn't know why he does it—and no one takes any notice.—*Nottingham Evening Post.* (Donald Blount.)

WHITEHEAD

IT is difficult, at the moment of his death, to assess Whitehead's claim to fame. He combined in an eminent degree two qualities which are not often found in association, first-rate mathematical ability and the creative intellectual imagination—which may be described as the power to go all the way with the facts and then to go a step farther—of the metaphysician. It was the combination of precisely these two qualities that constituted one of Plato's outstanding characteristics, and Whitehead's metaphysic was in many respects a modern restatement of that of Plato; indeed, he is responsible for the observation that the whole of subsequent philosophy, including his own, can most properly be regarded as "a series of footnotes to Plato."

Whitehead's philosophy was Platonic in the sense that it seeks to interpret the facts of the universe in terms of the ingression of a static changeless order of being, called "eternal objects," into a flux of becoming which he termed "the passage of nature." The "eternal objects" shape and inform the flux. The peculiar difficulty to which this kind of view is exposed is that of envisaging the nature of the relation between the two orders. Whitehead uses terms like "ingression" and "prehension," and speaks of "concrete occasions" which "prehend" numbers of different constituents, but these expressions are never clearly defined. In general, however, his universe is more "mixed up" than that of Plato, and his whole philosophy may be regarded as a handsome acknowledgment of the general "mix-up-edness" of things, a "mix-up-edness" which follows naturally from Whitehead's sustained criticism of what seemed to him the vicious abstractions of scientific method. Science, like common sense, is guilty of the fallacies of "simple location" and "misplaced concreteness"; it assumes, that is to say, that things are just here at this point of space, and just now at this point of time, and that an adequate account of them can be given irrespective of the context in which they appear. But so to regard them is to regard them as abstractions, since time and space enter into their nature and both they and the context in which they appear are "prehended" into the concrete "occasion" from which they cannot be abstracted and considered in isolation without falsification. Much of Whitehead's critical work was devoted to exposing the extravagant pretensions of the physical and mathematical sciences to give an adequate account of the universe as a whole. It may be seen at its best in the first half of *Science and the Modern World*, which deserves by any reckoning to be ranked as a classic.

It was when he came to construction that the value of his work becomes more dubious. He was continually making use of such expressions as "simple location" without taking the trouble to indicate the precise sense in which they should be understood; so much so, that critics have observed that the appearance of novelty no less than that of profundity in his work derives from precisely this happy capacity for inventing new phrases to cloak old ideas. Although Whitehead's thought crystallised on occasion into striking phrases—"religion is solitariness" or more precisely, "what a man does with his solitariness"—and although he could be very eloquent, his writing was often quite unforgivably obscure.

A man's writing may be "obscure" in either of two ways. What he says may be hard to understand because it is the expression of obscurity or because of its obscurity of expression. The former is pardonable—there is no reason, at least I know of none, why the universe should be readily intelligible to the mind of twentieth-century Nordic man—but the second is not, being a testimony to nothing but bad craftsmanship. A writer should study to make himself plain and, if he does not succeed, it is because he has not mastered the essentials of his craft. Now, Whitehead was often guilty of obscurity of expression.

I return to my original assertion that it is impossible as yet to assess his claim to be a metaphysician of the first rank. It must be remembered that Whitehead wrote at a time when all contemporary tendencies in philosophy were hostile to metaphysics which, under the influence of Logical Positivism, many philosophers have come to regard as a form of cosmic fairy-story-telling. Whitehead, with Alexander, was the last of the traditional metaphysicians who sought to gather up the vast miscellany of facts with which science, art, morality, history, religion and the day-to-day experience of common men present us, within the bounds of a single all-explanatory system.

While most professional philosophers are to-day profoundly suspicious of any such attempt, Whitehead had a great influence on Professor Collingwood and, through him, upon many of those young men who will be responsible for the development of philosophy during the next half-century. It may be that in fifty years' time philosophers will accord his work a higher estimate than many are prepared to give it to-day.

C. E. M. JOAD

THE AMERICAN WAY OF HOUSING

ADVOCATES of unfettered private enterprise might well ponder the story of post-war housing in the U.S.A. No "Socialist Experiment" or "crippling governmental controls"—favourite targets for American analysis of Britain's difficulties—have there stood in the way of production. Washington planning and material shortages, plausibly blamed in 1946 for high prices and output shortcomings, now scarcely count. Here was the chance for free enterprise to deliver the houses. Instead of which, *Fortune* has recently reported:

> Now materials are comparatively plentiful, governmental regulations are only a vestige—and the industry is perilously close to falling on its face.

American housing prospects have indeed changed since VJ Day. Then the constructional industry confidently faced the future with an accumulated housing demand, aggravated by the lean building years of the World Slump and Second World War and swollen by the persistent townwards drift of the previous fifteen years. Nor was optimism lacking in Administration circles. Fourteen million G.I.s were promised Homes Fit for Veterans: the 10½ million families in sub-standard accommodation were to be second in priority only to the 3¾ million new families obliged to "double up" during the war. To fulfil this promise Washington announced 1,200,000 houses in the first post-war year, and thereafter 1,500,000 a year for a decade. A National Housing Administrator was appointed; Congress gave substantial aids, constructional and financial, in the Veterans Emergency Housing Act. But results have been disappointing and prospects are worse. Fifth Avenue is full of magnificent new shop fronts, but the Veterans are living in motor "auto courts" or in the trailer towns popularly known as Vetsburgs.

In 1946, when materials were short but residential building had a clear start, one million living units, from permanent houses to trailers, were begun; but only 656,000 were completed. The comparable British figure was over 180,000 of all types, including rebuilt and repaired unoccupied bombed dwellings. The Americans built a far higher proportion of permanent houses than we did. But they started with treble the population, an unscarred country, a vastly different industrial position, and far greater domestic material supplies. We do not need to be complacent about the British effort to feel that American production was inadequate. And last year it was worse; with materials in relative plenty it is unlikely that more than 55 per cent of the 1947 target was achieved.

For some months house-building contracts have shown a tendency to decrease, while com-

mercial construction is leaping ahead. As the Federal Reserve Bulletin put it, "Construction markets seem to depend . . . to a considerable extent on the volume of work that can be undertaken without the usual regard for cost." President Truman told Congress in June: "The lack of adequate housing marks a glaring gap in our achievements . . . the progress of housing has not kept pace with progress in other fields." The same month showed 25,000 unemployed building workers in New York alone.

The causes of the relative decline lie in irreconcilable cost and consuming-power levels. In 1946 the official Bureau of Census made a sample study of Veterans' incomes in relation to housing needs. The average weekly income of the married ex-Serviceman was found to be $48. Over 70 per cent of those wishing to rent accommodation said they could not pay more than $50 a month. The maximum for 59 per cent of would-be purchasers was $6,000. This meant a return to 1939 prices, when a six-room suburban house cost roughly the price that the ex-G.I. and his factory-employed brother can afford to-day. But the average price in 1946 for that house was $9,400; and in 1947 it was already nearing $12,000. As *Fortune* wrote, "The price is cost plus what the market will bear." At the moment the market will bear a good deal, since prices are subject to the pull of record-profit-making corporations, willing to pay anything for commercial construction that provides a basis for further profits. House builders, faced by constantly rising material costs, will not and often cannot give estimates.

Labour costs do not bear the principal blame; for, while wages have risen by 70 per cent. since 1939, materials are up nearly 100 per cent., and certain key supplies, notably timber, are nearly 2½ times pre-war levels. But trade associations and price rings have played their part in the game, so much so that the Government recently initiated anti-trust proceedings against real estate associations. It would not be surprising if they unearthed examples as good as one late in the war, in which the Navy Department asked for quotations for cement deliveries to 18 ports throughout the country. Of 206 tenders, no fewer than 203 were, by an odd coincidence, identical.

The question arises why Washington has proved so powerless. The short answer is that the most powerful and well entrenched Lobby in Washington is that maintained by the real estate interests. In the autumn of 1945 it defeated the first, and able, housing administrator, John B. Blandford, in his initial battle to maintain wartime licensing control of construction. Significantly enough, the two leading opponents of control then have been prominent in Mr. Truman's Cabinet—Messrs. Snyder and Krug. Subsequent materials priority for house-building proved as ineffective as a black market could make it.

Blandford's pro-control fight sealed his fate, and early in 1946 he was succeeded by Wilson W. Wyatt, who decided that the only hope for low-cost housing was to rouse public opinion against the Lobby. Using every means of publicity at his disposal, he came out for restriction of non-residential building, building site price control, aid for short supply material production, and the passage through Congress of the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Bill. This last, among other things, aimed at increasing Federal aid to rental housing. Public opinion responded to the housing crusade; the Lobby lay low and waited its chance.

The treatment of the Wagner Bill was typical. After 18 months' hard work by experts it was passed unanimously by the Senate in April, 1946. Then for months it lay untouched in the House Committee on Banking and Currency. All that a last-minute campaign by its supporters could do was to bring it up to be killed at the end of the session, on the grounds that it was too important a Bill to be hurried through! Reintroduced during the 1947 session, even the Senate by now had had second thoughts. Despite a presidential appeal last summer, no progress had been made when the session ended. And long before that Mr. Wyatt had gone the way of his predecessor.

It would be wrong to think that Congress is uninterested in housing. It has passed the Housing and Rent Act, described by the President, as he reluctantly signed it to prevent a total lapse of rent controls, as "a step backwards." A feature of this Act provides for a voluntary increase of 15 per cent in many categories of rent—"voluntary," as Mr. Truman observed, "only so far as the landlord is concerned." Most of the emergency aids for Veterans' housing have gone. Well might the President say: "The real estate Lobby has been one of the most stubborn obstacles in the way of any constructive housing programme."

The only chance of cheap housing, short of a slump, would appear to lie in public housing and large-scale subsidies for rental accommodation built by State or private enterprise. The omens for the former are not propitious. Public Housing in the U.S.A., after a small start in World War One, was negligible until Roosevelt set up a Housing Division of the Public Works Administration, to put idle men to work. Such an ancestry is about as good a recommendation in Washington to-day as a Jewish grandfather in Hitlerite Germany, despite the fact that Public Housing did the excellent job of providing well over half a million dwellings in World War Two.

For political reasons the builders are against Public Housing, although they would secure the contracts. A broadcast sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders put the matter plainly.

> Politically minded individuals in Washington under a guise of emergencies and slum clearance may be planning to set up a tremendous nation-wide housing programme on a permanent basis . . . which could easily become a powerful and very vicious instrument of national political machinery.

No right-thinking citizen would, of course, place the private-enterprise-run Washington Lobby in the category of a "very vicious instrument of national political machinery."

Moreover, Public Housing means rental housing. Hitherto this has largely been provided by insurance companies, often with a minimum of control. A vast new project of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., Stuyvesant Town in New York, has already caused much controversy. It is alleged that the company well-nigh wrote the permissive State Act, granting it $25 million in tax exemption, allowing it to house 24,000—445 to the acre—where 11,000 had been previously housed, and securing State action to force existing owners to sell out to private enterprise. Nor was the notice of a racial rental policy by Metropolitan's chairman, Mr. Frederick H. Ecker—"Negroes and Whites don't mix: perhaps they will in a hundred years."—offset, in the opinion of many, by a subsequent hurried offer to build a similar estate in Harlem. In face of similar tax relief granted for this subsidised segregation, three Negro War Veterans sought legal action against Metropolitan.

Indeed, there are other reasons for preferring owners to tenants, white or black. Conveniently forgetting that between 1926 and 1936 no fewer than 1,600,000 "owners" lost their homes through foreclosures and a million others were only saved by Roosevelt's Home Owners Loan Corporation, a former Home Builders' president delicately raises the Red Bogy.

> From a broader social viewpoint home ownership provides an assurance of permanency, which has value in times of turmoil. . . . His type of citizenship is an antidote for disintegrating influences, Communistic or otherwise.

And if it be thought that the citizens, owners or tenants, have been used to luxury accommodation, the last Census revealed facts astonishing to those brought up on the Hollywood Way of Housing. Out of the country's 37 million dwellings, 14 million had no flush toilets, 12 million were without a bath, and 11 million had no running water. Electricity was unknown in nearly 8 million homes.

Therefore, amid conflicting aims and interests, the prospect of adequate cheap homes for ex-G.I. Joe and his friends is far from good. Many experts put their faith in a repetition of the 1921 price collapse, but no one is sure that the consuming power of the lower income groups would not collapse even further. Meanwhile there is fading the confident hope of a year or two ago that the housing demand would help to cushion any possible slump. And it is Vetsburg's ironic joke that it isn't true that there is a housing shortage: it's just a rumour started by a lot of people who cannot find a place to live.

EDMUND PENNING-ROWSELL

THE AGE OF REASON

I PUT the Age of Reason in the human mind at, roughly, six to sixteen. Under six, logical thinking is still inchoate; after about sixteen, the mind begins to grow hazy, muddled, accepting those clichés, conventions, *non sequitur*, and hearsay reputations which are the food of the average adult. Entertainers of the young should bear in mind this rational quality, as well as the child's preference for a good story that moves from event to event (however fantastic) with a sequence unconfused by quite irrelevant matter. I maintain (and have so maintained since I saw my first pantomime) that the dramatic entertainments we offer to children are all wrong: they are manufactured by adults for adults. Take a child of nine or ten to a pantomime called (say) *Robinson Crusoe*; if it knows the story, as presumably even in this illiterate age it will, it will expect what to most children is one of the best stories in the world—a desert island story. It will expect a shipwreck, an island, the building of a hut, savages, and finally a rescue. Children know, from many books, what desert island life is, and they have a right to get it. What does this miserable pantomime give them? God knows. I scarcely do, as I have not seen it for some years; but I remember a horrible jumble of principal boys, clowns, singing villagers and sailors, in which nothing seemed to have any connection with a desert island. The same silly grown-up mess is made of *The Babes in the Wood* (which should be an exciting story); we get a comic wicked uncle, comic murderers, worse than comic love scenes between Maid Marion and Robin Hood (however they got there; and, to make it more confusing still, Robin Hood is a young woman); a comic school, with comic Dame and Simple Simon, and a happy ending. Of course the young audience laughs; it would laugh at anything; but it can feel no sustained interest or excitement in these disconnected and irrelevant episodes. The only satisfactory children's play that I have seen is *Treasure Island*; that admirable adaptation is everything it ought to be—exciting, adventurous, romantic, reasonable, amusing, a good story, and the principal boy acted by a boy.

Peter Pan, which I saw the other day after a good many years, made on me much the same impression as before. The Barrie whimsey is tiresome, the mother-motive sentimental, the humour uneven. The crocodile is good; so is Captain Hook; both greatly alarmed my six-year-old companion; the dog Nana never fails to bring the house down; and the flying is admirable and enviable. Peter, of course, should not be a girl; epicene though he was, Barrie does say he was a boy; pantomime tradition has decided from the first to make him a principal boy instead, presumably to please the uncles in the audience. So Peter minces and gambols prettily about, his hair a beautifully curled crop, his mouth a wilful rosebud; indeed, Miss Phyllis Calvert looks most graceful and charming, and flies like an angel, and, among all those rough real boys, is a sweet miss. This must be regretfully accepted, since Peter was not human. No such excuse goes for Wendy. What age did Barrie mean this intolerable child to be? Young enough, apparently, to sleep in the nursery with her brothers. But this year's Wendy can scarcely, from her mature appearance, be under seventeen. Young children

are not bothered by this; they accept Wendy as a little girl; but they do not understand why she was such an odd little girl, with such an improbable taste for mending other people's clothes instead of tearing her own. It seems possible that Barrie knew no little girls. Many years ago I took three real little girls to *Peter Pan*; the youngest thought Wendy was grown-up and the actual mother of all the boys; the other two merely thought her very strange, and, I think, something of a class traitor, quite unnecessarily putting into grown-up minds the notion that little girls might be thus profitably and horribly employed. Anyhow, they felt no link with this smug child. For the rest, the pirates are alarming, as pirates should be, the Redskins tame and dull, as Redskins should not be, the house in the wood delightful, as houses in woods cannot but be. But the play would have gone very much better with children if Barrie (and the producers) had made in it no passes at adults; and this goes for all pantomime.

There are very many stories which would make admirable children's plays, if they were kept clear of the sickly pantomime infection. Any good adventure or mystery story goes well, if acted straight. *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *The Tale of Two Cities*, and *Sherlock Holmes* were favourite plays of my own youth; and good plays could be (or have been) made of *Ivanhoe*, *The Talisman*, *Coral Island*, anything by Stanley Weyman or a hundred others. The pantomime tradition is revered in this country; our form of it is so British that foreigners, it is said, have never been able to sit through it. Perhaps they are on the whole less far removed from the Age of Reason than we are. In any case, pantomime should invent its own material, and not mess up with vulgar adolescent nonsense good stories which are the heritage of that clear-headed and ill-used age.

ROSE MACAULAY

ON LEAVING A GOOD JOB

[*The author of this article recently resigned from his post as Director of Television.*]

How naturally one takes to not working. It is only a week or two since the big car made its last trip to my door, and already I feel as though that whole high-pressure existence had happened, if not to somebody else, at least a very long time ago.

The big car came to my door, decanted me with the personal accumulations of years in an office, and swept away, never to return. It is still dashing up and down between this office and that studio, between restaurants and theatres and sports arenas, sometimes packed to the driver's seat, sometimes carrying one lordly figure alone, but never carrying me.

This absence of the big car is perhaps the most reassuring thing in my new life. It was a very big car; the sort of car that takes a long time to go past and looks at first to be empty but for the driver, until its unfolding length discloses a figure in the back seat. Until recently I spent anything from an hour to three hours a day in the car.

I never liked being driven about in a car, and I liked less being driven about in a car that looked as though it were out to steal turkeys from lonely farms. I did not like leaving it outside pub doors when I went in to have a quick one, and I always hoped nobody in the pub would see the driver waiting to open the door when I came out. The only time it was really useful was when I tried to leave the Cup Final before the crowds got away; a humorist saw the car and cried "Make way for Jimmy Seed," and we got through. It was a Cup Final kind of car.

Now, if I have an appointment, I can start in time to walk or take a bus. And either often works out rather quicker, in Central London, than trusting to a car, especially a big car.

Talking of appointments, they have taken on a new meaning too. It is quite startling to realise that for some time now I have met only people I like, and gone only to places where I wanted to go. No more lunches with business contacts who enjoy meeting you as little as you enjoy meeting them; no more duty dinners; no more office conferences where you have to listen through two hours' tedium because somebody may try to pull a fast one at the end. Above all, no more keeping up appearances with old colleagues with whom you have been clashing for years. The other old colleagues you can, of course, still meet, and all the more freely because one of you is not working and can come at any time.

Of course all this may be just sour grapes, or rationalisation, to use a more topical term. I did like my job, although I did not like everything that went with it. And some of the attractions of my new life could have been had on any normal holiday. But when you have limited holidays you tend to go away, leaving a series of addresses and telephone numbers so that the office can, if it chooses, reach out and take you back. At best the end of the holiday is always in sight. This time I can stay at home, and there is no going back.

The day is longer now, though never long enough. I am at last getting a little order into my private affairs. For years they were relegated to three-quarters of an hour on Sunday mornings; now I have all the week. This is one of the hardest things to realise: that you have not to go to the bank on Saturday morning or wait another week, that you can go to the cinema in the afternoons, when there are seats, instead of in the evenings when there are none; that you can go to the first house at music-halls, get to a theatre without planning your whole day to that end, see art shows instead of keeping the tickets on your desk until they expire. You can even walk about and look at London when it is working, instead of only at the week-ends.

I drink less, too, now that I have more time. When the afternoon's meetings began at 2.30 and there was no prospect of getting a drink until 7 or 7.30, it seemed important to get another pint before the 2.30 meeting began. Now that I can go home and drink all the afternoon, or go out when the pubs open at 5.30, I seldom bother to drink at all. There is no need for those hasty pints on the way to business lunches where there would be no draught beer, or those famishing escapes to the well-remembered pubs that lie around the corner from Claridge's and the Dorchester. I drink less now and enjoy it more.

By the same token I buy fewer books and read more. For a long time I have been raiding bookshops when there was time between appointments in the West End, and most of the books I bought have been standing unread. Buying books is quicker work than reading them. Now that I have time to read I have become conscious of the number of books in the place that I have not yet read, so I am very careful about what I buy.

I may rediscover radio, too. For years I have had to listen to programmes with a professional interest, and, most restrictive of all, to watch television in the same way. Now I can choose for myself. I can decide to see *Hamlet* on Sunday and nothing else for the rest of the week. And I am not responsible for anything. If a stream of bad language issues from the screen I merely snigger instead of writing memos and holding post-mortems; if a breakdown occurs I have no temptation to spring to the telephone. The result is, of course, that I can enjoy it all far more.

Above all, after all these years of what is known as Policy, I can think for myself and keep nobody's secrets but my own. That in itself is enough to take years off anybody's age.

The only flaw in the whole business is the time of year I have picked. If it had only been summer I could have re-discovered Hampton Court and Richmond Park and Kew, and the river down to Greenwich and up to Teddington. But long before summer comes I shall be in a job again. However much my habits may have changed in the last couple of weeks, I still like to eat, and I am no spiv nor drone. Sooner or later I shall be expelled from my Eden; the ancient curse will resume its sway. Still, it has been worth having. As they say in the movies, *This is one thing they can't take away from us.* It will be something to look back to, like a short spell of peace between two long wars.

MAURICE GORHAM

The Arts and Entertainment

RADIO NOTES

After the exactions of large-scale Christmas broadcasts it has been pleasant to rest one's ears against quiet little things like talks, short-story readings, the smaller recitals of poetry and the like. Mr. James Stephens has begun a new set of four talks on Irish literary figures, under the not uncharacteristic title of "I Knew These Men." He is a perfect talker for the air, standing as he does curiously and indefinably apart from both the highly formal talker and the unbuttoned one. I do not myself trust Irish writers as critics of each other (it is generally their favourite role) or, for that matter, as literary critics at all. The creative writer's natural dislike of anything he can't do, or doesn't want to do, becomes, in them, not a climbing sorrow to be fought down, but almost a basic principle of literary criticism. On this occasion, however, Stephens talked very credibly about the excess of personality in Yeats's later poems. I take it that he would not want it *all* washed away; since the residue of personality in an author's style is presumably the thing that persuades one in the first place to undertake anything in the nature of prolonged study of him. But an objection to some of Yeats's later postures on the subject of old age is, I think, an extremely cogent one. The poems on age, staggering and menacing as they are at a first reading, do not have the staying-power of those of Hardy and Eliot on the same theme—and probably because they are less generalised. Mr. Stephens will companion this talk with another and more sympathetic one on Yeats. I hope that we may later hear them joined together. I am at a loss to understand why a talk called "The Passing of the Perfect Lady" was included in the Third Programme last week; though I can see that the Home and the Light would (rightly) not have stood for it for a single moment. It was a most promising title: one would like to have heard Max on the subject. But it turned out to be a coy, embarrassing little whimsey such as one might find in the more flighty and aberrant type of parish magazine.

The Home Service has restored "Time for Verse," which opened last Sunday with Miss Jill Balcon and Mr. Cecil Day Lewis excellently reading Clough, Hardy, Shelley and Wordsworth. Mr. Day Lewis read a charming new poem by himself called "The Chrysanthemum Show"; it was a sensible idea, which I hope will often be employed, to let him read the poem twice straight off, for lyric poetry is notoriously difficult to grasp when read aloud for the first time. The two best recent poetry broadcasts—if not the best at any time—have been Miss Margaret Field-Hyde's reading of Blake's Songs of Experience, and Mr. Marius Goring's unpredictable *tour-de-force* in Kipling's "The 'Mary Gloster'." I hope Mr. Goring will do other Kipling poems with the same unabashed attention to dramatic detail. Another excelling reading last week was given by Mr. James McKechnie in a short thriller called "The House of the Barber," by Mr. Roy Nash. Mr. McKechnie's performance was so varied, so well-timed, forceful, and imaginative that the story was almost over before one realized how deficient in any particular interest it actually was. Mr. Nash should be very grateful to Mr. McKechnie.

The Third is to start a new series called "Second Opinion," which will consist of letters from listeners on the Third's Talks and Discussions; so far as possible replies will be given. The idea of an audible correspondence column is an excellent one, and Saturday is a good choice of day for it. Listeners are also invited to complain of the neglect of certain subjects on the Third. This, too, is a good thing, though Mr. Frank Birch's suggestion that the commonplace queue grumbles he seems to find so novel and interesting were worth dwelling on (or were not al-

ready sufficiently canvassed in the daily papers) gives rise to a mild premonitory alarm. But perhaps things will turn out better than that. HENRY REED

THE MOVIES

"Crossfire," at the Tivoli and the New Gallery
"La Nuit Fantastique," at Studio One
"The Blue Angel" and "Swinging the Lambeth Walk," at the Everyman

A good American film and a bad French one reverse the usual order. *Crossfire* is one of those rare, hard, idiomatic pieces with which, every now and then, Hollywood will startle us by exploring America. Its picture of returned soldiers, still in uniform, takes us into a hard-drinking round of bars, dancing halls, all-night movies, police stations; and if these lack the genius for detail that distinguishes, for example, *Quai des Orfèvres*, they have at least an authentic ring. At the fag-end of a misted, truculent evening, a Jew has been murdered: struck down under a shaded lamp in an apartment, his body confronts us during the first few seconds of the film. What follows is the resolution not only of who, among a bunch of soldiers, has been the murderer, but of the kind of murder involved. This particular case involves motives outside the usual ones of greed or sex. The soldiers who come under suspicion vary in type from the incurably gentle to the nonchalant and the ironic, and as we get to know the characters of these men under suspicion, it soon becomes pretty plain which of them it is has killed the Jew because, as he reveals casually, he hates Jews. Detected, he has to be pinned down; and a proof of the film's merit is the leap in tension that accompanies each disclosure. Among the thrillers that depend on realism and character *Crossfire* can claim a respectable place. Its facts are ugly; it keeps them ugly and appeals to one's more decent feelings. Does Mr. Robert Montgomery, as the rather superior investigator, lecture us at one point a little too plainly on the question of anti-Semitism? It is, of course, a difficult problem, and the way in which American film-making is hedged with proprieties and popularities renders it even more difficult. Chaplin, in *The Great Dictator*, managed easily enough; *Crossfire*, nearer home, has to smooth a sometimes awkward passage. The result is an intelligent, exciting, popularly debatable film. Its director, Edward Dmytryk, gives a notable emphasis in light and shade to the taut dialogue: excellent performances from Robert Mitchum and Robert Ryan.

La Nuit Fantastique supposes a student, working in Les Halles, who spends most of his time asleep in pursuit of a dream girl. These imaginary adventures sadly lack imagination, and their only effect on the spectator is to make him very quickly as somnolent as the hero. This, I suppose, is the seamy underside of the poetry introduced into films by Cocteau and others. One waits till the end merely to see how the film will get out of the tangle of its own boring invention. The dream-girl, in her fairy princess's robe, turns out to be real! But how, why, when, or where, goodness only knows.

It is pleasure, after this dismal nightmare, to go back eighteen years at the Everyman. 1930, apparently, was the year in which Professor Jannings ceremoniously blew his nose in class and tracked his pupils down at night to the gauzy squalors of "The Blue Angel." There, heftier and more taking than now, La Dietrich was singing for the first time "Falling in love again." The songs, so often repeated, have not been improved on since, and slow and unconvincing though the film may be at times, it keeps its drama of the fallen schoolmaster and the indifferent tart. "Fawleeng in luvagain": the words come back with the final metallic charm of the early talkies. Neither Sternberg, who directed, nor Dietrich was ever to do as well in America; and Jannings—well, this wasn't the first or the last time he'd stumble out in his snows, and he had the sense not to exchange them for Hollywood's. Len Lye's *Swinging the Lambeth Walk*, which precedes *The Blue Angel*, is an abstract colour cartoon which most refreshingly visualises its jaunty air. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

A NEW TALENT

MISS PHYLLIS TATE is a young composer endowed (if the evidence of a single work is to be trusted) with a fresh, genuine and thoroughly trained talent. To last year's Contemporary Music Festival at Copenhagen she contributed a Saxophone Concerto which I have not yet heard; but I hope soon to have the chance, having been much attracted by a more recent work of hers which was broadcast last week. This was the *Nocturne for Four Voices*, a setting of a poem by Sidney Keyes for soprano, tenor, baritone, bass, string quartet, bass clarinet and celesta; it was admirably performed by Miss Hooke, Messrs. Soames, Fuller and Franklin and their instrumental colleagues. What strikes the listener at once is the distinction of the musical ideas and the convincing freedom of their deployment; his ear is flattered by a continuous delicacy of texture, in particular by the happy use of that sometimes over-picturesque instrument, the celesta; and at the end he retains an impression that moments of a rare, still beauty have resulted from the interpenetration of two poetic natures. As a whole, the work is not an unqualified success, its faults as well as its virtues being closely dependent on the nature of its text. Sidney Keyes was a true poet, and a precocious one, but when he wrote this poem he was barely seventeen, and his immaturity shows in a certain looseness and vagueness of conception which are ill-suited to the demands of music; in particular the individual symbolism of each of the four voices is hard to grasp. This occasional uncertainty of aim is reflected in a vocal line which is sometimes expressive, but too often inconclusive and imprecise. The harmonic movement and some of the melodic patterns seem to show the fruitful influence of Britten, but the sensibility revealed is individual, and the total effect evocative in a high degree. DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RETURN OF THE GODDESS ARTEMIS

Under your Milky Way
  And slow-revolving Bear,
Frogs from the alder thicket pray
In terror of your judgment day,
  Loud with repentance there.

The log they crowned as king
  Grew sodden, lurched and sank:
An owl floats by on silent wing,
Dark water bubbles from the spring;
  They invoke you from each bank.

At dawn you shall appear,
  A gaunt red-legged crane,
You whom they know too well for fear,
Lunging your beak down like a spear
  To fetch them home again.

ROBERT GRAVES

INTERCESSION IN LATE OCTOBER

How hard the year dies: no frost yet.
On drifts of yellow sand Midas reclines,
Fearless of moaning reed or sullen wave.
Firm and fragrant still the brambleberries.
On ivy-bloom butterflies wag.
Spare him a little longer, Crone,
For his clean hands and love-submissive heart.

ROBERT GRAVES

PHILOSOPHY

The Journal of the British Institute of Philosophy

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

THE BODLEY HEAD

Correspondence

THE COLD WAR

SIR,—In your interesting comments on a recent Sunday evening broadcast of mine, you raised points concerning relations with Russia which are worth a little further clarification.

I had suggested that the best hope of peace and the only means of making power a deterrent of wars (to be preferred to its use as a means of victory once wars have begun) is for those who hold power to make up their own minds what its purpose is, and to make clear that purpose to those who might challenge it. Then at least the challengers would not gamble on not being seriously resisted; a chance taken twice already in this generation by aspirants to European domination—with war as the result—who obviously believed that the prevailing desire for neutrality would enable them to apply the one-by-one device. Our confusion of purpose in the inter-war years explained our confusion of policy: we assumed that our deepest desire was peace when our final actions showed it to be national survival, the right to live under our own institutions, free of external coercion or dictation. On behalf of that purpose we readily sacrificed peace. The truth was learned too late. If the Americans had accepted under Woodrow Wilson what they did accept twenty-five years later under Roosevelt and Truman, it is quite unlikely that there would have been a second world war. If the arrangements for collective defence now being made by the United States, Britain and France had been made when first urged by Clemenceau in 1918-1919 in the form of Anglo-American guarantees to France (in which Wilson and Lloyd George concurred, but which public opinion rejected), equally would there have been little chance of a second war. These past experiences, I have suggested, should help us in shaping our policy towards Russia, still confused.

As against the foregoing you insist (1) that Russia knows already (do *we?*) that even Communists in Britain would fight to defend our civil liberties and national independence and that, in the event of war, Britain and the United States would unite; (2) Russia believes, however, that the Western democracies are "quite incapable of reaching that measure of economic and political agreement reached by Eastern Europe under Communist leadership" and that European chaos will aid the spread of Communism, though (3) Russia fears that Marshall aid will make Europe an anti-Soviet base.

From this you deduce six or seven possibilities which it would be beyond the scope of a letter like this to discuss. But the key to all of them is in proposition No. 2 above. For if the Russian rulers really believe (as they probably do) that we in the West are incapable of unity, they have no reason to co-operate with us and every reason on grounds of security as they see it to build up their own separate and preponderant power. Western chaos might be replaced by some form of anti-Communist Fascism unless forestalled by Russia as in Eastern Europe. This conviction is not likely to be shaken by any form of argument except that of the fact, the event: the fact of a non-aggressive Western unity open to Russia on the terms accepted by the Western nations themselves.

Western unity will be difficult to achieve; impossible if certain Leftist influences predominate. It will depend on accepting the fact of difference in the economic and political constitution of nations, and co-operation (despite that difference) on a return, that is, to our original war purpose, which so much of the Left has repudiated—defence of the right of each nation to live under the institutions of its own choice. So little was it our purpose to destroy Communism or support Capitalism, that the Conservative and Capitalist British Government of 1939 did not ally itself (as some insisted it would) with German Fascism ("the last throw of capitalism") to fight Russian Communism, but with Russia to fight Germany. Capitalist America also became the ally of Communist Russia, republican France that of monarchical Britain, and so on.

Early in the war, however, this purpose of national freedom, the right to be different, was repudiated as reactionary and archaic by powerful elements of Leftist opinion which insisted that the war must be made the instrument of a new economic world order.

It is obvious that any effort to bring about economic and political co-operation between different systems—Capitalist and Socialist, say—will fail if we start with the assumption that it is utterly impossible and the very effort mischievous; if we believe our task to be, not to devise means whereby Socialism and Capitalism can work together, but to make all nations Socialist. This latter effort will, I suggest in the light of recent experience, not merely fail but be bound to produce further disasters. Indeed the real issue with Russia—the most urgent case in point—is not as between Socialism and Capitalism. It is not economic. It is political, cultural, doctrinal.

Thus, Socialist Britain finds it far easier to reach agreement with Capitalist America than with Socialist Russia. British Socialism does not conciliate Moscow, which evidently feels itself threatened far more by Social-democracy than by capitalism, American or other, which becomes every day less and less integral, and more and more emerges into Social-democracy. What Moscow fears most is general recognition of the internal right of political opposition; a right which it does its best to nullify or severely restrict in the nations within its orbit. It heads to-day a Holy Alliance against the constitutional right of political opposition, precisely as Russia did under the Czar a century and a quarter since. The early nineteenth-century Holy Alliance was frustrated by the coming together of Britain and the United States in the Monroe policy, a frustration which did not stand in the way later on of both governments establishing workable relations with Czarist Russia, with whom republican France, previous to 1914, also maintained relations, both political and economic: alliance plus loans.

You insist that Russia does not intend war nor want it. Neither did Britain in 1939. Nevertheless, we went to war (although not attacked) on behalf of that form of power politics which is the politics of not being overpowered.

To come to terms we must know the nature of our difference with the Russians. If their Monroe Doctrine as exercised in Eastern Europe (including Eastern Germany) allowed as much internal freedom to satellite states as the twenty Latin American republics enjoy under the United States version we should be much nearer agreement.

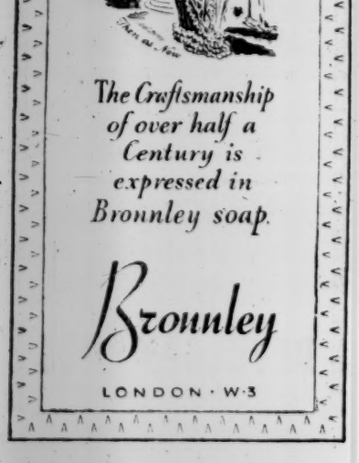
Your article is headed "Another Great Illusion." I am still not clear where the illusion occurs; nor whose it is.

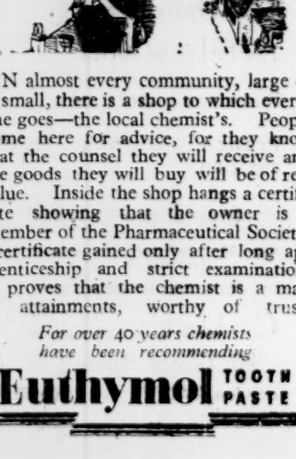
NORMAN ANGELL

New York.

SIR,—There is one consequence of the invention of the atomic bomb which, so far as I know, has not been pointed out. Hitherto it has always been assumed that the cruellest of all wars is civil war. So long as war was fought with weapons that dealt destruction only to individuals or small bodies of combatants, that was no doubt true. But with the advent of weapons of mass destruction the reverse is the case. No side in a civil war can afford to use atomic bombs or bacteria, for the simple reason that it would thereby deal mass destruction to its partisans as well as its enemies—not to mention the country which it aspires to control. But in a foreign war, where everyone on the other side of no man's land is presumed to be an enemy, no such scruples need deter the belligerents.

It follows that of all probable wars civil war is now the *least* destructive. It is, therefore, preferable (given the two evils) to foreign war. And, of course, civil struggles stopping short of war are preferable to any war at all.





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This has a bearing on the famous Marxist alternative, to which Critic drew attention in your issue of December 20. If the class struggle between capitalist and worker is allowed to degenerate into an atomic war between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. with their respective allies, the "common ruin of the contending classes" is, as Critic says, a possible and even probable outcome. In order that the struggle may not take this form, it seems to me vital that the line of division should run as far as possible across frontiers and not along them.

If this is once admitted, it follows that those who strive to accentuate the class struggle in the capitalist world are, in effect, working to minimise the destructiveness of the present world conflict, while those who think on nationalist lines are in effect sabotaging civilisation.

Some will ask why we cannot have both social and international peace. That is not "reality-thinking." The question is natural enough to those whom the capitalist system has treated well. It has not treated well the greater part of the race; and it is idle to ask them to submit to exploitation with a good grace.

53 Victoria Road, Oxford. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

MR. BEVIN AND THE ARABS

SIR,—The British Government seems determined that British arms, manpower and equipment shall not be used in any circumstances to help implement the United Nation's decision on Palestine; and if the Foreign Secretary's reply on December 12 to Mr. Warbey's interjection represents policy, this is to extend to non-participation in, or the vetoing of, a future Security Council decision on Palestine under Article 39 should events in that country be judged to constitute a threat to peace. It is surely, therefore, in every way important that British arms, manpower, and equipment shall not at the least be used in any way to help reverse or defeat the Uno decision.

A blatant contradiction in our Palestine policy has been that, although the threat of Arab violence has been given as the reason why Labour could not fulfil its traditional policy, yet it has been the British Government itself which since 1945 has created and equipped the Arab forces in the Middle East and tipped the balance increasingly in their favour.

The British Military Mission in Iraq consists of eighteen officers and ten other ranks. Their function is to advise on the supply and training of Iraq's army and supervise its re-equipment from British sources. Iraq is now attempting to create an air force, and two officers and nine other ranks are attached to the British Military Mission to help in this work. Transjordan's forces are British-created. The British taxpayer subscribes two million pounds a year to the upkeep of the Transjordan Arab Legion. Forty British officers are attached to this force in an executive capacity: its leaders are all British officers. Nine officers and thirty-six other ranks form the British Military Mission to Saudi Arabia. This Mission is a new creation and was instituted by the British Government as recently as January, 1947. The British Military Mission to Egypt (now in its closing stages, though certainly not as a result of British decisions and desires) has supervised the delivery to Egypt from May, 1945, to June, 1947, of forty military aircraft, thirty-eight Scout cars and two hundred and ninety-eight carriers apart from small arms. Details regarding small arms supplied to Egypt and *any* details at all of arms supplied to the other Arab countries have been refused in the Commons during the last two years.

The British Missions act as a channel of supply for new arms and equipment necessary to carry out and extend training. Most of the leading Arab countries and their spokesmen have announced their intention to seek a reversal of the Uno decision by force if necessary. To meet this threat the United States Government announced on Monday, December 8, an arms embargo applying to the Arab countries.

It would seem that there are two courses open to Mr. Bevin. He can follow in the steps of the American arms embargo, or he can—as now—proceed to rearm and train the Arab forces whilst the new Jewish State continues to be blockaded by the Arab levies on its land frontiers and by the British Navy off its coasts. LYALL WILKES

House of Commons.

FRENCH SOCIALISTS

SIR,—As I have just returned from a few days in Paris where I had long talks with French Socialists, both leaders and rank and file, may I adduce the following facts by way of comment on Mr. Crossman's "Letter to a French Socialist" in your issue of December 27th?

(1) The French Socialist Party got 15 per cent. of the votes cast at the last general election and has lost nearly half its electorate and one-third of its members since liberation.

(2) Among the surviving members of the Socialist Party to-day only a fraction (about one-fifth) are working class.

(3) Party membership to-day is nearer 300,000 than 400,000. During 1947, 50,000 Party members failed to renew their 1946 membership cards. The loss is expected to be even heavier in 1948.

(4) The leadership of the Socialist Party is at present in process of excluding the Left Wing (Madame Andrée Marty Cap-Gras; J. M. Hermann; Fourier; Guignebert; Pierre Stibe, etc.) *because they protested against the anti-strike law.*

(5) The loss of its Left Wing in these circumstances bids fair to make the breach between the French Socialist Party and the French workers final and complete. The Christian Trade Unions acknowledge the M.R.P., and not the Socialists, as their political leaders, and the *Force Ouvrière* is officially non-political and syndicalist in its ideology.

(6) So far from being orphans of the Marshall storm as Mr. Crossman appears to imagine, the French Socialist leaders are receiving at least as much help and encouragement from the U.S.A. as General de Gaulle.

(7) Neither M. Léon Blum nor any other French Socialist leader, again *pace* Mr. Crossman, has ever taken the line that France must be "independent" of both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. while striving to be on equally good terms with both: they do not believe in a "Western bloc" or an "international third force" in that sense. On the contrary, they have in public, as in private, supported the rupture of the commercial negotiations with the U.S.S.R. and raised no protest against the rapidly worsening political relations. The official Socialist view is that there is not and cannot be any such thing as a danger to French independence or to the prospects of French Socialism from American Big Business. Socialist leaders argue that there is, therefore, no need to have any reservations about, or to take any precautions against, the impact of the Marshall Plan by seeking better economic and political relations with the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe.

(8) The French Socialist Party's conception of a "Third Force" at home is not a new combination dominated by themselves and independent of both General de Gaulle and the Communists. The Party accepted with prompt and easy grace the defeat of M. Blum on that verbal platform, and has since resigned itself with equal facility and speed to a continuation of the present grouping, which is dominated by non-Socialist, semi-Gaullist forces.

House of Commons. K. ZILLIACUS

THE LAW AND FASCISM

SIR,—Mr. Elwyn Jones in his first article, writing on seditious libel, said, "intention is the essence of this offence, and if the acts done or words used were not done with seditious intention, the offence of sedition has not been committed, however defamatory the words may be . . . the offence is not committed unless there is an intention to create disorder by the provocation of ill-will between groups of H.M.'s subjects."

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Notice to holders of Securities of Railway, Canal and Inland Navigation Undertakings.

The British Transport Commission give notice that:—

1. Holders of the Securities listed in Part A of their announcement dated the 9th December 1947 became instead on the 1st January 1948 holders of British Transport 3% Guaranteed Stock 1978-1988 (issued at par and redeemable at par), the amount of each holding being calculated in accordance with the rates published in a further announcement to-day. Copies of the announcement dated the 9th December 1947 are available for inspection at offices of Banks and copies of the further announcement referred to above will be similarly available on and after the 7th January 1948.

2. Holders of London Transport 3% Guaranteed Stock 1967/72 became instead on the 1st January 1948 holders of British Transport 3% Guaranteed Stock 1967/72 (redeemable at par), the amount of each holding being calculated at the rate of £1 nominal of the new Stock for each £1 nominal of the old Security.

British Transport Commission

London, 2nd January 1948.

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and the boy in the boiler suit

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This, as it stands, is rather misleading. It suggests that, even if a jury consider the words used to have been seditious libels, they should still let the defendant off if they think he had no intention of being seditious when he uttered them, either because he was ignorant of the law or because he stupidly did not appreciate the probable effect of his language. This, I am sure Mr. Jones will agree, is not the position.

The jury are not supposed to act as psycho-analysts and try to puzzle out what was the actual intention of the particular defendant; their job is to look at the actual words used, consider all the surrounding circumstances, and then infer from that whether a reasonable person, who is assumed to appreciate the normal, natural consequences of his actions, using those words in those circumstances, must be presumed to have had a seditious intention. As Folkard's *Libel and Slander* puts it, "Such intention is to be collected from the paper itself. If it appears that the contents of the paper were likely to excite sedition and disaffection, the defendant must be presumed to have intended that which his act was likely to produce."

Finally, Coleridge, J., in *Rex* v. *Aldred*, said, "Nothing is clearer than the law on this head, namely, that whoever by language, either written or spoken, incites or encourages others to use physical force or violence in some public matter connected with the State, is guilty of publishing a seditious libel. The word 'sedition' in its ordinary, natural signification denotes a tumult, an insurrection, a popular commotion or any uproar; it implies violence and lawlessness in some form; but the man who is accused may not plead the truth of the statements that he makes as a defence to the charge, nor may he plead the innocence of his motive; that is not a defence to the charge. The test is not either the truth of the language or the innocence of the motive with which he published it, but the test is this: was the language used calculated or was it not, to promote public disorder or physical force or violence in a matter of State?" In considering their answer to this question the jury should take into account the place and mode of publication, the type of audience, the state of public feeling at the time, but not, it seems, the state of the defendant's mind at the time, his motive—in short, his intention.

I raise this point not for the fun of indulging in academic legal hairsplitting, but because it is of considerable practical importance. Several magistrates and others seem to regard the "honesty and sincerity" of the Fascists as if it were some sort of legal defence. In fact, it is quite irrelevant—the only test is whether, on any reasonable interpretation of their conduct and utterances, the words they use are seditious or liable to cause a breach of the peace.

I find Mr. Elwyn Jones' suggestion that the Public Order Act should be extended to allow for the banning of meetings somewhat distasteful partly because this will forge yet another weapon for future use against the Left, primarily because there is no guarantee that it will be used against the Fascists. As appears from his articles, there are many laws already in existence which the Fascists are repeatedly breaking, and nothing is done because the Authorities seem to think that "freedom of speech" entitles them to commit any illegality they please. Whilst Mr. Ede and his Home Office advisers continue to adopt this extraordinary viewpoint, any extension of the law along the lines suggested will be academic.

The classic case of failure to use existing powers is the failure to use the precedent of *Duncan* v. *Jones* to ban Fascist meetings in advance on the obvious ground that they are likely to result in a breach of the peace. One's mental state when trying to follow the reasoning of the Under-Secretary of State on this matter can only be likened to that of Mr. G. Marx on the occasion when he was shown a document and was asked if he understood it. "Easy," he said, "a child of two could understand it. . . . Go, get me a child of two; I can't make head or tail of it myself."

52b, Oxford Road, O. H. PARSONS
Kilburn, N.W.6.

MR. HENRY WALLACE

SIR,—It would hardly be possible, I think, for the points of the new Henry Wallace situation to be more accurately stated than they are in your editorial note. But I cannot believe that among those of your readers who have knowledge of the American political scene there will be many to accept your inference that an immediate need of the United States is a national Labour Party. Is not this altogether unreal?

By Labour you mean, doubtless, Labour-Socialist. But the American nation is overwhelmingly anti-Socialist and, it appears, will so remain. The record of the Socialist parties since the first world war has been pitiable for disunity and feeble voting strength. As for the great movement of organised Labour, it has expanded impressively since the Roosevelt New Deal; but it is deeply divided. In this presidential year the two great federations (A.F. of L. and C.I.O.) have one principle of unity—hatred of the Taft-Hartley Act which was carried over Mr. Truman's veto. Both bodies are working for repeal, but agreement on this issue does not modify their mutual antagonism in policy and appeal. Nor, I submit, is it possible for the American party system to be rebuilt so as to make Labour one of the two national parties: the United States is unavoidably a two-party country. If, however, it were possible, could any development we can think of be more perilous for the Republic, in view of the American people as we know them—their traditions and political practices, their industrial system and multiple elements of social conflict?

Princes Risborough. S. K. RATCLIFFE

M. VERDOUX

SIR,—Both your Critic and Sir William Clark have missed the point. The film is a failure because it falls between two stools. A degenerate who gets away with a large number of murders of the nature indicated, must be suave, cool and imperturbable. There are moments in the film when Mr. Chaplin portrays such a character to perfection. But when he lapses into the old familiar Charlie Chaplin, making every kind of ridiculous *gaffe*, we find ourselves in a vacuum.

Charlie Chaplin *trying* to commit murders and failing every time, could be exquisitely funny, but in M. Verdoux he tries to have it both ways. As a result we have a number of laughs but feel somehow flat and defrauded. Mr. Chaplin is a very great artist, but it is clear that he must "stick to his last."

Ashmore, GEOFFREY E. HOWARD
nr. Salisbury.

OH, MR. PORTER, WHAT SHALL I DO?

I always thought that *Euston* was the proper place to queue
For *Holyhead*, and *Rugby* and stations north of *Crewe*,

So imagine my confusion when I found my "line" was wrong
And was sent across to *Paddington* to join another throng.

The engine there was blushing *Red* on finding its mistake,
Reversed itself, and slowly tried its usual route to take,

But on to *Reading*, *Swindon*, in its unfamiliar sheen
Whistling so plaintively for the wearing o' the *Green*.

Apologising for bringing this to your notice, I still maintain that if you saw the Holyhead express at *Paddington*, you had been celebrating Christmas well in advance. SIDNEY L. BIRCH

84 Homeside Road,
Bromley, Kent.

[Polycritic replies: "Sorry; for Holyhead read Birkenhead."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

CONSIDERING how much time, money and anxiety human beings habitually expend upon their clothes, one may well wonder why so discreditably little attention has been given to the subject by serious thinkers. If they deign to mention finery, it is only to condemn it. Dr. Johnson is typical: "Fine clothes are good only as they supply the want of other means of procuring respect." A disapproval of appetites one does not share is one of the most usual as well as most odious of human characteristics; and Dr. Johnson was notoriously ill-dressed. So was the author of *Sartor Resartus*. Negligence of apparel is held to be a badge of the philosophic tribe; artists, on the other hand, are often at pains to be picturesque; and it is arguable that when sages plume themselves upon their superiority to a frivolous convention, they are, in fact, disclosing a defect of aesthetic sense. Most people, men as well as women, feel that their clothes are a part or projection of their personality; and of all the applied arts habiliment is the most widely practised. Even the disorder of the philosopher's dress must be taken as a form of self-expression, however little wantonness it may be calculated to kindle.

The most interesting books I have hitherto read upon this solemn subject are Mr. Gerald Heard's *Narcissus* and Dr. Flügel's *The Psychology of Clothes*. Now comes Mr. Quentin Bell's *On Human Finery* (Hogarth Press, 12s. 6d.). The thought is so clear, the humour so appetisingly dry, that I am compelled to recommend the book urgently, although the author is hardly less puritanical than the run of philosophers. He attributes the love of finery to the most unamiable of motives, and seems insensible to the flower-like evanescent charm of fashions.

> "But, Oh, the very reason why
> I clasp them, is because they die."

Mr. Bell gives his reasons for rejecting every theory of fashion that has been put forward, except one: the purpose of this book is to expound, to correct and to enlarge the views of Thorstein Veblen.

Veblen was an *enfant terrible* in economics and sociology whose influence outside the United States has been, I suspect, smaller than his deserts. He antagonises both the great sects now warring. A deadly, indeed prophetic, critic of capitalism, he found much to question as well as to admire in Karl Marx, whom he reproaches with taking too much account of Hegel, too little of Darwin. I am utterly unqualified to pronounce upon Veblen as an economist. His *Theory of a Leisure Class* can, however, be enjoyed by the general reader. Though at first it may seem a satire or *jeu d'esprit*, it must be held important even by those who decline many of its conclusions.

According to Veblen, man has "the instinct of workmanship," and this prevails in the most primitive societies. When, however, man begins to hunt and to raid, the goods thus obtained are more highly prized than the fruits of regular work, and "labour acquires a character of irksomeness by virtue of the indignity imputed to it." (One must object that pre-history reveals hunting to be more primitive, by millenniums, than agriculture.) Thus, Veblen argues, society splits into two classes, the predatory or governing class, which prides itself on laziness, and the industrious class which gazes on the other with admiring envy. This social pattern is perpetuated, indeed accented, in the capitalist world, where it is thought more honourable to live on the fruits of other men's labour than to dirty one's own hands. Non-productivity stamps a man as the dignified member of a superior class. This class seeks to emphasise its prestige by "conspicuous consumption," "conspicuous leisure," and "conspicuous waste." Sport, religion and architecture are valued channels for expensive display of this order; clothes, however, furnish the commonest and clearest method of advertising the idleness of their owners. History shows the upper class in every civilisation choosing clothes that, besides being sumptuous, hamper movement and betray any exposure to dirt—clothes, that is to say, as ill-adapted as possible to use at the plough, the smithy and the oven. The toga, the brocade coat, the crinoline and, today, the white collar serve the same purpose as the mandarin's finger-nails, labelling the wearer as not a worker.

Mr. Bell adopts this lively hypothesis and improves upon it. Veblen explains changes in fashion as a method of conspicuous waste, the upper class demonstrating its superfluity of wealth by discarding its clothes before they are worn out. Mr. Bell, noticing that in the Orient changes in fashion have been few and slow, offers a wider explanation:

> Fashionable changes can occur only when wealth is so distributed in a society as to allow more than one class the luxury of sumptuous dress. There must, in addition to the ruling class, be a middle class, and this middle class must have the power, financial and political, to vie with that above it, to imitate its dress and to defy its sumptuary laws. Such a class must be constantly increasing in power and in wealth in relation to the highest class . . . The society which produces changing fashions must itself be changing. Surely we have here the obvious difference between the civilisation of Europe and that of China.

This may be true—I wish I knew enough of the economic history of China to say. I suggest, however, that European Man showed himself far less conservative than Chinese (or Egyptian) Man long before the development of a wealthy middle class. It was the frugal denizens of the violet-crowned city who inaugurated the appetite for novelty that has now for some 2,500 years distinguished Western civilisation. How far a taste for novelty produces changes of society, and how far they produce it, cannot easily be decided.

Now let me give without comment a typically provocative passage from Mr. Bell:

> The enormous esteem in which dogs are held and their almost universal employment as ornaments is no doubt due in a large measure to their servile attitude; also because perhaps they are psychological substitutes for children (a large section of the pet-loving public in this country consists of women in the higher-income groups). But what makes dogs modish above all other creatures is (*a*) their connection with the futile pursuits of the chase, (*b*) their sequacity which makes them in effect a part of the costume, (*c*) and this is their greatest merit, the extreme malleability of the species when subjected to selective breeding. Dogs are the fashion because we can fashion them to our will . . . The highly bred dog can have its whole frame twisted and distorted into shapes of the most astonishing kind. An uninstructed observer would suppose that the owners and vendors of these crippled and unhealthy animals must of necessity be exceedingly cruel. On being informed that the monstrosity fanciers are among the most resolute critics of vivisection he would set them down as hypocrites. Such accusations would, however, be unjust; the torturers are genuinely devoted to their victims. Fashion, as we have said, has a morality of its own: and the cruelty involved in the deformation of unoffending animals, like that involved in blood sports, is redeemed by the economic futility of the motive; that involved in scientific experiments is felt to be odious because of its unpardonable utility.

History suggests that even the most fruitful hypotheses are liable to suffer from over-simplicity. Man likes to attribute to only one cause phenomena that have many. Geniuses so various as La Rochefoucauld, Darwin, Marx and Freud have proved victims of this desire. So, I suspect, have Veblen and Mr. Bell. They assume, or come near to assuming, that the ruling passion of man is to excite envy, and that idleness is far the most respected of all qualities. These hypotheses are more entertaining than plausible.

The son of a Norwegian emigrant who worked with his family a farm in Wisconsin, Veblen was predisposed to underestimate the value of non-physical labour. Though he earned his living as a teacher in universities, his terminology reflects the social simplicity to be found in tillers of the soil. His leisure class includes not only professional men but what are now called black-coated workers. "Idle curiosity" is the name he gives to all research not deliberately aimed at increasing the available quantity of useful objects. Mr. Bell, without the excuse of a horny-handed origin, gaily adopts this question-begging vocabulary. One wishes that he had sought to adapt Veblen to the further facts he knows and to the more civilised values he accepts.

Such a correction is the more necessary, and the easier, because of a recent evolution in the clothes of women. In the nineteenth century the clothing of upper-class men became far less sumptuous and leisurely. Mr. Bell's explanation is that "a certain amount of work" was no longer socially disreputable; and while I must maintain that certain sorts of work never were socially disreputable, I agree that the Victorian upper class adopted the sombre moral code and the no less sombre costume of the bourgeoisie. Believing as I do that it is usually wiser to seek more than one cause for any phenomenon, I would add that the industrial revolution had made the air in Piccadilly hardly less smoke-laden than in Lombard Street. A similar though less far-reaching change came some twenty-five years ago in the clothing of upper and middle class women: a costume in which it was convenient to drive a motor or even to extract an appendix became modish for daytime wear. It still is; and Mlle Chanel, who launched this fashion, may be thought to have done far more for the emancipation of women than Mrs. Pankhurst. (M. Christian Dior, I suggest, cannot succeed in his current attempt to reimpose upon women the tight-lacing requisite for a wasp-waist, for this combats social forces no less irresistible than Mrs. Partington's Atlantic.) Mr. Bell considers that this revolution, which he appears to under-estimate, "favours the proletariat against the middle class"; and it is true that class-distinctions are less visible in apparel than ever before, even in the United States, where austerity and taxation have not plucked from the richer classes most of their fine feathers. The advertisements in *The New Yorker*, however, continue to support the Veblen theory: a scent manufacturer, for instance, is content to tempt customers with a single inducement: "The most expensive perfume in the world." One may notice similarly the word "exclusive" often vulgarly applied to any restaurant or shop that excludes nobody who is able and willing to pay an exorbitant bill. It is true also that the doctor still dresses for his work differently from the street-cleaner, and not only for reasons of convenience. The duke, on the other hand, does not dress differently from the doctor, nor has he done so for at least a hundred years. The chief distinction displayed in apparel, at any rate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is not between work and idleness, but between physical and non-physical work.

Do we love ornament, as Veblen suggests, only or chiefly because of the expenditure of labour it is supposed to reveal? I doubt it. And when we are told that women like new and sumptuous clothes because these excite the envy of their social inferiors, I hear a lady interrupt:

"But I choose my frocks and hats because they are pretty and becoming, not because they are sumptuous."

"Your distinction, Madam, is illusory. The standards of aesthetic excellence and sexual seductiveness are governed by the desire of the leisure class to proclaim itself as such."

"Look at the suit I have just brought from Paris. Could anything be more practical? It is, moreover, less ornamented than anything you could find in an Oxford Street shop window. Where in it do you find any sign of your conspicuous consumption, leisure and waste?"

"It cost ten times as much as anything in Oxford Street, because of the outstanding, highly paid, and widely advertised skill of the designer and cutter; and you know that your friends will at once recognise its expensiveness."

"My friends may, some of them. But the butcher's wife won't. If I wore this to open a

bazaar, the townspeople would think I was insulting them by not bothering to put on something nice. And, another thing, haven't you noticed, the latest fashions are now copied and mass-produced in next to no time."

What Mr. Bell would answer I don't know. If women ever followed fashion chiefly in order to impress members of a lower class, they do so no longer. A woman who buys a hat at the most expensive milliner's will find the same fashion, if not the same hat, in every store within a month. Some distinction between fashionable and merely sumptuous clothes is made by Mr. Bell, but not the distinction between their respective functions. While sumptuousness proclaims "I am superior in class," *chic* proclaims "I am superior in elegance and taste to other members of my class." A sable coat, for instance, however unfashionable in cut, is socially superior to the most fashionable coney coat; yet some women, possessing both, will prefer to wear the latter. (If I had space, I could show also that *chic* is not identical with, but a category of, fashion.) One further fact requires attention: the "best-dressed" women (when such still flourished in England, just before the war) were less likely to be duchesses than wives or mistresses of business-men. Indeed, some grandees have taken pride in their dowdiness, regarding it as beneath their dignity to be smart. Does Mr. Bell retort that business-men rather than dukes have long since become the governing class? Yes, but a woman would still rather be taken for a duchess than for the wife of a business-man.

There are other points of detail on which it would amuse me to argue with Mr. Bell. He suggests that textile manufacturers are largely responsible for changes of fashion, because they keep producing new materials that require to be cut into different shapes. This struck me as so unplausible that I consulted a prominent *couturier*, and the facts he gives show that it is entirely untrue. Again, Mr. Bell seems to suppose that the admirers of Burne-Jones wore "arty" clothes because these were more expensive than the products of Worth and Paquin. But they weren't. The truth is that many women are anxious to display in their apparel their superiority not in wealth but in artistic sensibility or even, alas, in moral worth.

My various objections to this most stimulating book are made chiefly in the hope of goading Mr. Bell into a continuance of his researches. *Of Human Finery* reveals a wider experience than Veblen possessed: its author is a painter as well as a lively thinker. Surely he has a lot more to say?

RAYMOND MORTIMER

SCHOOL

Plato's Theory of Education. By PROF. R. C. LODGE. *Kegan Paul.* 18*s.*

Education for Sanity. By W. B. CURRY. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Quality of Education. ED. By DENYS THOMPSON and JAMES REEVES. *Muller.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Books on the theory of education are almost exclusively read by intending teachers in pursuit of a diploma in education, and they do not impress their readers. The only experienced teachers with a coherent theory of the aims and purposes of their work are those in rebellion against the conventional school. The official doctrine is a rag-bag of conflicting generalities, a calendar of great thoughts of the great, and a set of recitations about leadership, character-building, and intellectual discipline based on a purely oratorical psychology.

This lack of a dogma is probably a good thing. Given a dogma, governments tend to use it and prevent the good eccentric teacher from practising his art. Out of the present three books both a set of new theories and an account of present practice might be made. Professor Lodge presents what Plato preached for his own time, with all the apparatus of scholarship and adds with conscious irony advice to present-day America. Mr. Curry answers every doubt about progressive education ever evolved by a dubious parent—whether progressive or reactionary. *The Quality of Education* is a compilation by practical "specialist" teachers who are worried about the effect of their specialisation upon the whole way of life of the young people they teach.

Professor Lodge's book is, unfortunately, difficult reading. He does not write well, is repetitive and too much addicted to the traditional classical don's jests about modernity. His prime virtue is that he is clear about the difference between Plato's idea of a desirable plan for education and the normal habits of the society for which he meant it. Plato has been borrowed and transformed to give authority to the favourite beliefs of many periods and places. Professor Lodge eagerly defends him from his admirers and from those who would denounce him as a Fascist. He makes it clear that Plato can only be accurately interpreted so long as the small population, isolationism, slavery and hard-headedness of Athens are kept in mind. Indeed, though his opinions about the upbringing of the young are clear, emphatic and ingenious, they are utterly irrelevant to the modern school and its difficulties. For him the school was not an important institution, the school teachers were "cheap hirelings" and the main responsibility for the younger generation rested upon the ordinary elder citizen. Some of his views on teaching method might be called modern, though no one could call them "extremist."

> He does say that knowledge acquired by compulsion obtains no hold on the mind, and accordingly prescribes compulsory play as the method of instruction. But the emphasis is quite as much upon the "compulsion" which directs play-tendencies aright, as upon the playfulness of the child which responds to such treatment . . .

Music and literature, or at least the recited word, play a great part in his "curriculum," but no risks are taken.

> We shall therefore establish a censorship over writers of such stories and shall desire mothers and nurses to tell only the authorised fictions: moulding the mind with such tales even more fondly than they would mould the body with their hands.

The tales must offer "models of virtuous thought," and the games, Plato says, must be kept on the right lines.

> Children who make innovations in their games, when they grow up to be men will be different from the last generation of children and will desire a different sort of life, with other institutions and laws. And this is evil. We must try in every possible way to prevent our youth from desiring to imitate new modes either in dance or song.

Plato would evidently have taken no stock in the notion of a liberal education for all:

> The right way of living is to live in sports always: sacrificing, singing and dancing in honour of the established gods: propitiating the deities and living according to the appointment of nature—being for the most part puppets, but having some little share in reality.

Apart from his main argument, Professor Lodge provides much amusing miscellaneous information about ambidexterity, the teaching of spelling, the probable population of the Model City, and the education of women in Athens.

Mr. W. B. Curry, the Headmaster of Dartington Hall, has stated the latest version of the progressive educational gospel according to Homer Lane, H. G. Wells and Bertrand Russell most persuasively in *Education for Sanity*. A protesting visitor puts the case for coercion, corporal punishment, religious instruction, and is duly convinced by Mr. Curry. This is a moderate and reasonable book, and if the objections to freedom in education were reasonable it would be valuable in answering them. But I fear that it will reach only the converted and everyone else will continue to say what they have always said. Mr. Curry is obviously a good teacher, a shrewd debater and a sincere idealist. It was a little worrying to find him at the beginning of the book praising a teacher because pupils said he was not like a teacher but "more like one of us." He is, however, thoroughly practical, and while believing passionately in self-government for the young is aware that committees will always make bad blunders, and regards that as an "excellent education for life and democracy." In defending his rejection of religious instruction he makes an excellent debating point:

> I know that some people hold that there is a sort of pigeon-hole in our minds labelled "Faith," and that if God doesn't fill it, Hitler or Sir Oswald Mosley will. Introspection discloses no such pigeon-hole in my mind, and observation of hundreds of children brought up without specific religious instruction makes me think that the doctrine has very little in it.

He faces the difficulties of sex instruction with unusual understanding and freedom from nervous bravado. It is remarkable to find a supporter of co-education who realises the harm that can be done by preaching "the notion that a brother and sister comradeship is the ideal relationship between the sexes." The remark of Sanderson of Oundle that "a school should be a miniature copy of the world as we should love to have it" is quoted with approval, and is a fair motto for Mr. Curry's plan for sanity. Like all such plans, it is all a little chilly and sterilised and is stamped with some of the personal idiosyncrasies of the planner. But it will be the worse for our public system of education if the odd idealisms of places like Dartington Hall are not allowed to disturb and fertilise it.

The authors of *The Quality of Education* keep using the word integration. They are rightly afraid that subject teaching in secondary schools may insert slices of unco-ordinated information into the heads of examinees and fail utterly to educate any child for living. They are also anxious that children should be given some protective inoculation against the anti-educational forces of the adult world in the press, cinema and advertising. The standard of the individual essays is high, and the technical suggestions and book lists should be useful to all teachers who are afraid of becoming teaching machines.

FREDERICK LAWS

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

The British in Asia. By GUY WINT. *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Whatever the critics of British expansion may say, it cannot be denied that British power has, for the past hundred years or so, at least resulted in peaceful conditions all over South Asia. There have, of course, been minor outbreaks of violence and a number of small military campaigns, but these have never greatly disturbed the peaceful conditions in which nearly one quarter of the total population of the world has been enabled to live. It may be argued that no man wants peace if his soul be not free. Nevertheless, with the world in its present state, it may be equally true that the price of freedom turns out to be too costly an investment. It is not, however, open to doubt, that without peaceful conditions the various countries of South-east Asia, most of them already independent, cannot progress in any way at all; they are indeed more likely to slide back into conditions compared with which the period of British tutelage may seem in retrospect to have been a Golden Age.

Mr. Wint's main concern is with the preservation of peace. In the past, he says, it was not by British power alone that peace in South Asia was preserved. "It was also," he notes, "by the Indian power which the British organised. The British Empire in Asia, though a part of the world-wide British Commonwealth, has always been to some extent a separate entity from the rest of the Commonwealth. Indeed, it might have been called more accurately an Indo-British Empire. It was based on India; its extension over the countries clustered round the Indian Ocean was, by joint effort, British and Indian."

> For the world's peace, the tragedy is that this partnership of Britain and India, a compelled one at the start as far as India was concerned, never, owing to faults on both sides, matured into genuine marriage. The union may now be dissolved, or at least its character and purpose will alter greatly. How profound a change this will make in the general conduct of world affairs has perhaps not

yet been fully realised, so much has attention in the matter been concentrated upon the purely domestic problems of Indian politics. At a time when the world is quaking, in a region where all had been certain all now becomes problematical and dangerous; and the least that may be said is that the area of tension in world affairs is thus very greatly enlarged.

It follows from this that the best chance of avoiding a complete breakdown in the former unity of South Asia would seem to lie in the conversion of the former British Asiatic Empire into some kind of free confederacy, which might form a regional unit of the United Nations Organisation. Unless some such arrangement is possible, no defence, and therefore no real peace, is possible. The difficulty is to combine the satisfaction of the national aspirations of the peoples of what have been the British territories in the regions bordering on the Indian Ocean with the maintenance of all this vast expanse of sea and land as a single unit for the purpose of defence and certain common interests.

In Mr. Wint's opinion it is the first task of the new Indian Government (his book was written before the formation of the two separate Dominions) to address itself to the problem of how to ensure the peace of the sub-continent under the new system. In theory he is, I think, quite right; the practical difficulty is that during the British period many of the smaller Asian territories (Burma, Ceylon and Malaya, for instance) were ruthlessly exploited by the worst type of money-grabbing Indian who contributed nothing to the welfare and progress of the countries concerned. The hard fact is that Indians of this type are no more wanted than the British, and in many territories nationalist movements have now developed which are understandably suspicious that Indian nationalism may develop into Indian imperialism.

Meanwhile, some of the disasters foreshadowed have already occurred. The Indian army has been partitioned, and the Supreme Commander has resigned because the lack of co-operation between India and Pakistan has now made it impossible for him to carry out his task. It is a gloomy situation and Mr. Wint's analysis of it gives no cause for optimism. Nevertheless, I cannot too strongly recommend this short, dispassionate and very readable book, which, for an understanding of contemporary events, could hardly be bettered. Its only obvious defects are an unduly sketchy index and the absence of a list of books for further reading.

JOHN MORRIS

MRS. MEYNELL.

Alice Meynell. Prose and Poetry. *Centenary Volume. Cape.* 15*s.*

Alice Meynell. A Memoir. BY VIOLA MEYNELL. *Cape.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

A pencil drawing by Sargent; *She walks, the lady of my delight;* Francis Thompson and the Charing Cross Post Office; a sonnet called *Renouncement;* Henley, Patmore, Lionel Johnson—such shades and echoes as these are stirred in the mind of the post-Edwardian by the name of Alice Meynell. The Memoir written by her daughter Viola is at hand to fill in the outlines; the handsome Centenary Volume shows on what the great contemporary reputation was based. We do not lose sight of Sargent's graceful lady with the clasped hands, but moving from this stance she becomes critic, observer, journalist, parent, excelling (it would seem) in all.

Her life is part of the legend. In Italy she and her sister spent a nomadic childhood, rather vaguely brought up by a volatile, adoring mother and educated by the fastidious reticent scholar who was their father. (Elizabeth Butler, the other daughter of these gentle parents, was to achieve fantastic fame as a painter of battle scenes.) A letter written by Dickens from Genoa describes the haphazard household: Christiana, the mother, busy with her "arts" (as she called her paintings); the children pale and stockingless, their hair cropped short and tied with bright bows. "C. said that she had invented this headgear as a picturesque thing, adding that perhaps it was—and perhaps it was not."

About Alice Meynell's young adult life the Memoir says little. She wrote poems, we know. She protested against the restricted opportunities of work open to women. (In late life she was a suffragette.) However, after her marriage in her thirtieth year there was no more chance of idleness. Magazines were edited or supplied with contributions; eight children were born; (one, Vivian, died). These, "at once the most befriended of children, yet the most slighted," adapted themselves from infancy to the highly charged atmosphere of the household. Inevitably they took to editing papers of their own under the editorial table of their parents. Their watchful devotion—the more intense because never wholly satisfied—was shared by others outside the family: Francis Thompson, Coventry Patmore, Meredith. But no one could hope for her undivided interest. In her last years the recollection of her failure to respond to affection (it had estranged her, even, from Coventry Patmore) caused her much unhappiness.

The Memoir has the shortcomings of so many studies written at too close range, too fondly. While it is lavish in anecdote it is grudging in facts, dates particularly. When, for instance, were the eight children born? When was this work or that written? As far as we can tell, the essays, with their finished style and searching judgment, must have been produced almost always in conditions of stress and speed. Her criticism is penetrating, and original without ever being bizarre. She investigates Charlotte Brontë's prose style instead of her life. She notes that Cowper "was not rescued from despair by the heroic couplet"; that Lascelles Abercrombie, whom she admired, was a poet "capable of reaching a breaking point that power should never know"; that "Macaulay's well-known way was to exhaust those possibilities of effect in which the commonplace is so rich"; that Tennyson, "the modern poet who withstood France," had a style and a manner, locked together at times in a single stanza. She defines the particular way in which Beddoes should be forgotten. She launches an attack, fully documented, on *the corrupting influence of Gibbon's style.* And, after an appreciation of Christina Rossetti's poetry, she adds: "Nevertheless, we are not surprised to hear that she generally did not work. Her poems show this when they lack friction and weight."

That comment is significant. Careless eloquence in style did not impress her. "To draw water in a sieve," she made the analogy, "is an easy art, rapid and relaxed." In an age of decoration she had a passion for structure, for the bracing intricacies of grammar. Her tastes were consistent. She did not care for the fat, blunt, idle English grasslands, preferring cultivated land or, in winter,

> the stony fields, where clear
> Through the thin trees and skies appear,
> In delicate spare soil and fen,
> And slender landscape and austere.

She remarked on the slowness of English acting, on "the fatal languor . . . that is perceptible in the narrowing of our literature." She never hoarded papers and letters, destroying sometimes what was valuable. The semi-archaisms *albeit* and *whereof*, and in poetry *thou* and *thee*, which give to her work a deceptively romantic air, she did not regard as ornament but as an exact form of syntax.

Her poems were mostly the product of more leisured days, in youth and old age. The freakish

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taste of anthologists has made her best-known poem one with an almost disagreeable sentiment: ("She is so circumspect and right; she has her soul to keep.") The editors of the Centenary Volume have chosen the verse less surely than the prose. *Renouncement* (written at the enforced breaking of her youthful friendship with a priest) is popular, I think, because it treats of the widely felt grief of separation, also, perhaps, because it encloses a hidden resentment; but *Parted* is a much finer poem about the same experience, and should have been included. *A Song of Derivations* and *A Rainy Summer* are there, but not *An Unmarked Festival, Soeur Monique, A Dead Harvest.* A five-line stanza, such as Sidney and Browning used for poems of serenade, was her best medium. Hers is a craftsman's poetry, written with a fine tension on pensive and private subjects; such work will always give pleasure. But in prose she found greater scope.

Her writing shows curiously little fantasy. It contains portraits, but not a hint of fiction. It is not the literature of dreams but of ideas and observations, coming from an unusually sensitive and vigorous mind. Now that we are sufficiently far removed from Meredith's praise and Mr. Beerbohm's protest, we can discover for ourselves something of the stimulation that the contemporary reader found in her work. We might expect, by the way, knowing her particular sympathies, that the outstanding essay in the collection would be on a woman or a poet, if not on one who was both. Nothing of the sort: it is on Dickens.

NAOMI LEWIS

NEW NOVELS

Badon Parchments. By JOHN MASEFIELD. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Red Danube. By BRUCE MARSHALL. *Constable.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Passage from Home. By ISAAC ROSENFELDS. *Secker and Warburg.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Greek Chorus. By W. P. RILLA. *Secker and Warburg.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

In *Badon Parchments* the Poet Laureate has written an admirable historical novel which is both convincing and exciting. His subject, as the title indicates, is King Arthur's battles against the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain. It was at Badon that he decisively defeated the heathen; but Badon is not listed in any gazetteer and where it was we do not know. Nor do we know much more about Arthur. The literature that has grown up about him, from Layamon to Tennyson and after, is enormous; it has not made his reality the less shadowy, and one thing is certain: the Romanised Briton of the sixth century can have had little in common with the Arthur of romance, whether medieval or modern. Mr. Masefield, however, has not set out to add to the existing idealisations, but rather to provide a probable basis for the creation of the myth, and the great merit of his novel is its apparent actuality. There are no Tennysonian trimmings, no Pre-Raephaelite knights and ladies in *Badon Parchments;* there is simply a political and international situation of a kind that the history of our own times has made hatefully familiar to us. By an excellent stroke of invention, the story is related as it were through the diplomatic bag, by a Byzantine envoy, John of Cos, to the Emperor Justinian; for in Mr. Masefield's version, Arthur is a young British nobleman who has been sent to Byzantium by King Aurelian to study the latest methods of warfare, and John of Cos is the leader of the military mission which returns to Britain with him.

They return to find what is left of southern Christian Britain out-flanked to the east and the north by Anglo-Saxon heathen states and by British quislings, and in danger of invasion from the sea by heathen pirates based on Brittany. The king is old, his heir a boy, his ministers corrupt, inefficient, already defeated in their hearts, and his army ill-equipped, ill-led and committed to obsolete methods of warfare. Nor is there exactly a warm welcome for Arthur and the Byzantine military mission; the King's ministers quack, "No war this year" for all the world like the Beaverbrook press on a later occasion, but the farsightedness of the northern Britons gives Arthur the chance to organise their armies according to methods of warfare superior to those of the enemy. Meanwhile, Aurelian's kingdom is attacked on all sides by the heathen, and only the patriotism and inspired leadership of the young Prince of Cornwall, helped in part by the arrogantly inept psychological warfare of the enemy, prevent southern Britain crumbling at the first assault and enable the Britons to hold up the heathens at Badon until, unexpectedly, by means of the use of cavalry on a scale unknown before, Arthur sweeps down from the north to rout the Anglo-Saxon armies.

I have used such expressions as "quislings" and "psychological warfare." Needless to say, Mr. Masefield does not. His is no history in modern dress. But the force of his story and a great part of the conviction it carries do derive from the parallels between the situation in sixth century Britain as the Laureate describes it and the modern world. To the Victorians Mr. Masefield's reconstruction of the bases of the Arthurian legend might well have seemed merely fanciful; to us, who will see in the behaviour of the heathen striking resemblances to the political and military methods of the Nazis and, more particularly, the Japanese, it will seem quite horribly probable. And Arthur's victory is made to appear even more convincing simply because it turns on the use of new weapons. Judged purely as an adventure story, *Badon Parchments* is first-rate. Technically, it is brilliant, for the essential strangeness of the time and scene is tempered for us and made credible through its being seen through the eyes of a foreigner from a higher civilisation, with whom, justifiably or not, the reader is bound to identify himself. The book is a triumph for Mr. Masefield's grave austerity of imagination and for the beauty of his prose.

The Red Danube hardly represents Mr. Bruce Marshall at his best. It is the literary equivalent of those magazine covers which depict the activities of dolls whose features are stamped with a sort of horrible innocent depravity; in which moustachio'd colonels, at once baby-faced and booze-stained, lecherously ogle female puppets in bursting A.T.S. uniforms. Parts of this comedy of British Military Government in Vienna are very funny indeed; Mr. Marshall's use of military slang and jargon is devastating in its effectiveness. But I did not feel his satire was happily matched by the seriousness of his purpose, which is, I take it, to win us to the Catholic faith. Here Mr. Marshall seemed to me to fall down badly in taste because I do not think Christian apologetics are amenable to presentation in terms of puppetry, even though some of the puppets are dressed as nuns. But then, where religion is concerned, we Nonconformists are great on taste.

Passage from Home and *Greek Chorus* are both first novels. Mr. Rosenfelds is much the more mature, but Mr. Rilla's is interesting in its promise. *Passage from Home* is a study in the development of an adolescent member of a middle-class Jewish family in Chicago. The character of Bernie, who is also the narrator, is drawn with sensitivity and skill, and the clash between him and his father, whose inhibited offers of love the son is unable to accept, seeking a quasi-filial relationship outside the family, is both moving and subtle.

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Aldous Huxley, and one situation in *Greek Chorus* is altogether too reminiscent of one of the sub-plots of *Point Counterpoint*. But Mr. Rilla is just as obviously indebted to Virginia Woolf. His novel follows a conventional pattern: he isolates one day in the lives of the inhabitants of two houses and a night club in a street that is certainly not farther than round the corner from Charlotte Street, W.1. His characters are overwhelmingly arty; they include a sculptor, the editor of "*Parnassus*, the unchallenged architect, as some say, of the literary scene," a poet of the thirties—"poet of the machine and champion of the working class," a newspaper reporter, one or two crooks, a beautiful prostitute. The fortunes of these and the other characters are linked in altogether too artful a way, so that one's final impression is of goldfish endlessly circling round their tiny bowl. It is, in other words, a highly literary novel, compounded of recollections of many other novels. But this is not necessarily a bad thing in a first novel. Mr. Rilla writes well, and it will be interesting to see what he does when he smashes the goldfish bowl, moves out of Fitzrovia and looks at life rather than literature.

WALTER ALLEN

SAMUEL PALMER

The Visionary Years. By GEOFFREY GRIGSON. *Kegan Paul.* £2 2s.

The story of those early years in Samuel Palmer's life which excite us to-day has not hitherto been told, and Mr. Grigson's scholarly volume is extremely welcome. A. H. Palmer, author of the *Life and Letters* (1882), was born years after the Shoreham period had passed. Little knowing that his father's fame would reside in these drawings "full of technical blunders, anomalies and absurdities," he was at pains to defend and inflate the later work which seems to us nowadays so commonplace. He went indeed to the length of destroying all but one of his father's early notebooks, whose sentiments he deplored as "neither sufficiently masculine nor sufficiently reticent." This ill-judged act, followed by an accidental fire in Vancouver, has severely curtailed the available documents. However, like Van Gogh with whom he has many affinities, Palmer was a useful hand at letter writing and articulate to the point of verbosity in expressing his religious and aesthetic notions. Mr. Grigson has of course drawn upon the Richmond Papers and has also studied certain unpublished manuscripts belonging to George Richmond's descendants. These sources, together with some new letters from A. H. Palmer, have enabled him to present a clear picture of those inspired years in Kent with their stormy political background. He has included a meticulous catalogue, renamed several of the 169 works listed therein, and cleared away much confusion. His labours may well lead to the rediscovery of many important works, for no fewer than seventy still remain untraced.

Samuel Palmer, it is now clear, has been too emphatically dubbed "follower of Blake." His mystical tendencies were strong before the two ever met. Raised by a nurse "deeply read in the Bible and Milton," educated in the classics by his father the bookseller, Palmer, by the age of nineteen, had "spent much time in controversial reading" and had learnt to see his life as a deeply serious mission. Fortunately his parents encouraged him in a painting career, which opened early with unusual success. From the age of fourteen he was a frequent exhibitor at the British Institution and the Royal Academy; at sixteen he was passing through a Turner period; at seventeen he met Linnell, on whose advice he spent nearly two years drawing at the British Museum. There he got to know George Richmond, his lifelong friend. About this time he wrote in the surviving notebook "carefully avoid getting into that style which is elegant and beautiful but too light and superficial," and later ". . . those delicious visions which are the only joys of my life—such as Christ at Emmaus . . . and secondary visions of the age of chivalry."

It was thus a person of some mental and worldly experience, though aged only nineteen, who was taken by Linnell to the "House of the Interpreter" (the bell-handle of which the "Ancients" always kissed), to meet Blake on October 9th, 1824. The effect on Palmer was dynamic. The old mystic, who had never doubted that every true artist was an inspired spirit sent into the world to preach spiritual values, epitomised all that Palmer had grown to admire; in the excitement of their subsequent friendship the younger man felt great gusts of self-confidence. He soon perceived that the countryside of Kent offered exactly those landscape outlines he could transform into his own "visions of little dells and nooks and corners of Paradise: models of the exquisitest pitch of intense poetry"—to quote his own description of Blake's Virgil woodcuts. He rented a house in Shoreham, which became the centre of a company of young friends—Richmond, Calvert, Finch, Walter, Tatham, Sherman—united in their enthusiasm for art and their reverence for Blake. "Palmer," wrote Sturge Moore, "invented hill such as he had never seen and Calvert dreamed the tiny compact homes and cities. . . . They learned to use the Shire round them like a glass through which to see a dearer land."

Mr. Grigson traces admirably this period of Palmer's art: the strong and then diminishing influence of Blake in the design, the emergence of a vigorous personal style when Palmer had come to identify himself with Shoreham's rustic seasons, filling the foreground of his mind, as it should a young man's, with temporal realities that overlaid but never dispersed the religious and visionary dreams. Unfortunately "Yellow Twilight" and "The Magic Apple Tree" which are described as the highest achievement of the Shoreham years, depend for this distinction on their colour. Faced with rather dark monochrome plates, the reader cannot intelligently follow Mr. Grigson's encomium; but perhaps it was wise not to put these favourites through the distorting mangle of our English colour-processes.

Palmer's Shoreham drawings have enjoyed great popularity in the last twenty years. They appealed to our painters as the work of a native artist almost unaffected by the trends of painting across the Channel. Palmer cannot be linked to the Claude and Dutch landscape traditions which preceded him here, nor can he be drawn into the great line which reaches from his contemporary Constable to Picasso. His influence, though not preferred at secondhand, is still alive among the younger generation of artists. To the amateur, Palmer's early work appeals no less, like a breath of fresh air after the laboratory experiments in which he and his emotions have been the guinea-pigs. I think, too, that the Marvel of familiar scenes transformed by twilight lingers in memory as one of the magic visual experiences of childhood. Later, though pastoral poets often recalled it to the mind's eye, the only paintings it seemed to evoke were crudities by amateurs and the falsely twinkling covers of Christmas cards: apparently no sensitive artist would touch the theme. Thus, as we peer into the lamplit cottages and dusky cornfields of Shoreham, our pleasure is heightened by rediscovering a long-lost excitement.

Palmer's pathetic decline after the glorious years is sufficiently recounted in the final chapter. Indeed, with a few added pages on the etchings and illustrations, it would cover all that we now find interesting in the remaining forty-five years

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LONGMANS

of his life. But I think the decay of so subjective an art is here attributed too much to outside events—political changes, marriage, travel, etc.—and too little to the Blake influence, which forced Palmer's talent to ripen like a hothouse plant, only to wither for ever a few years later under the strain.

Mr. Grigson's prose does not equal the high standard set in the same field by Binyon and Sturge Moore, but his book is very readable and sure to fascinate everyone interested in English painting. EARDLEY KNOLLYS

Week-end Competitions

No. 934

Set by V. S. Pritchett

The usual prizes are offered for a twelve-line poem commemorating the ambivalent emotions of a parent seeing his children off to school. Entries by Jan. 20th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 930

Set by Ambrose Carrot

A political body asks people to send "the book they most dislike" to their Christmas Fair. Which book would be chosen by any one of the following: Evelyn Waugh, Cyril Connolly, Raymond Mortimer, Miss Compton Burnett, Damon Runyon, P. G. Wodehouse, and what would they say? Length up to 200 words.

Report by Ambrose Carrot

Mr. Wodehouse and Damon Runyon were the writers most anxious to rid their libraries of offending volumes, but in spite of the broad hint in the terms of the competition very few political books were chosen. I was sorry but not surprised to see Jeeves turning on his progenitor, for ingratitude is the vice of comic characters. The fact is Wodehouse and Runyon were the easiest to parody. Evelyn Waugh was a poor third; the subtler hands funked him, though there was a passable attempt by Miles March. The rest of our contemporaries, if I except L. E. J.'s Cyril Connolly, were nowhere. A much cast-out book was *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*, but *Das Kapital* stands untouched on the shelf, and no one was really coarse and threw out, say, *The Faerie Queen*. Even the unpublishable libel that delights the private eye of the settér of this kind of competition, was small.

L. E. J.'s parody of *The Unquiet Grave* was an easy winner. He has four guineas. Two guineas go to R. S. Jaffray, for the Runyon despair of his last sentence.

"A Book of Nursery Rhymes"; but not for their matter, once Nurse had learnt to say, "The House that Cyril built." But because the book had hung upon an apocalyptic Tree. My first party; gilded pomegranates; the sizzle of tapers dying in a waxy stench; the rucked dust-sheet; uncertain foot-hold on a parquet floor. And the apprehension, sudden, harsh, unbearable, through shocked eye, sickened nostril, shrinking epidermis, of *others*: "not-Cyrils."

"Autrui-voilà l'assommont." — ETCHEBARY, Quai d'Orsay, Quai d'Orléans, Quai d'Anjou.

Little girls in pink ribbons; the hot fingers of adhesive infants curling to clasp the Noah's Ark, the silvered aeroplane. "Not for Cyril." The Id writhing, elver-like, to escape the coils of other Ids. Hôtel Jacob, Hôtel Delambre, Hôtel de Savoie. Here was rooted Angst; the daily twenty-minutes-past-eleven tears; the whisky sloshed about within; cult of the Lemures (anagram: "ME rules").

"Little Mr. Muff," "Little Bo-Cyril," "Cyril had a Little Lamb." Vain exorcisms: the fatal Tree floats, ineluctable, in the vision, like a liver-spot. Others, les autres, die andere, alii, heteroi; muslined, mottle-legged, voiced like Parakeets.

"Ah! je le répète sans cesse, il n'y a qu'un malheur, l'égoisme." L. E. J.

I am sending a book which Regret, the horse-player, borrows from the town library and nobody cares less if he does not return it. He hands it to me instead of five bucks he owes me for one of his track commissions, and I am lucky to get any percentage at that. It is written by a jane called Austen, and the pictures alone give me the willies. All of it that I am reading is about a doll called Elizabeth who has a beau name Darcy, who is worth a billion berries and wears gaiters I will not be found dead in. All the same she becomes his ever-loving wife though other guys make passes at her, including a preacher who is next for her pop's place and a jim-dandy at his business. There are a lot of officers but I never find they have any soldiers to give orders to. All anybody wants is to be high hat, but this Elizabeth plays her bones good enough to get the simoleons too, or anyway, a cinch on her old man's. It is long ago. R. S. JAFFRAY

Well say boys— The Bowery

I am looking through a glass at Harry's and deciding that Scotch is still what a guy that is a right guy drinks when Sadie the judy who stands them up spins a piece about you wanting books us guys don't want. Harry says that is easy; there is no book he wants 'cause of his spelling isn't so good he reads no more than comics anyway. But I beg to state otherwise. Harry, I say, here is this guy wanting books—well, I am for sending him one that gripes me when I think of it—not that I think much of books but this one is poison. "Eric" or little by little is what this book is and if ever there is someone of whom the less I see him the more it is O.K. by me it is Eric. That feller is so good it hurts. He is the kind thinks Rye is a throat tonic and judies is all just like his sister. I hate suckers and this Eric is what I hate worse than a sucker; he is a guy which has seen the light. I know this seeing the light. When a guy does that he gets the jitters and goes telling his life story to the cops. No, you can have Eric. If you know any cops maybe he can be their best friend in person instead of doing dirt on right guys

Like yours truly, DAMON RUNYON
J. J. CURLE

P. G. WODEHOUSE ON BURNS'S POETICAL WORKS

I don't know whether you've ever run across this Burns laddie. Possibly those coves whose beans positively bulge with the good old cerebellum are in the habit of putting their shirts on him for the literary stakes; and I gather that in Scotland he's generally considered the cat's pyjamas. But so far as I'm concerned he's one of the outsiders. Absolutely. What I mean is, there are limits. I mean to say, it's all very well to have a shy at the good old aristocracy on occasion. Nobody could agree more than I do with the bloke who thought up that one about kind hearts and coronets. But this chappie Burns goes a bit too far. Dash it all, when it comes to calling a lord a "birkie" and a "coof"—well, I mean to say, a bit thick, what? No classical restraint, if you see what I mean. None of the good old jac ful bonhomie.

And then there's that bit about wine and knaves. Not right, you know. Makes a bloke feel like some dashed sneak thief when he passes the decanter. In fact, if you ask me, the whole bally book's subversive. Absolutely. G. J. BLUNDELL

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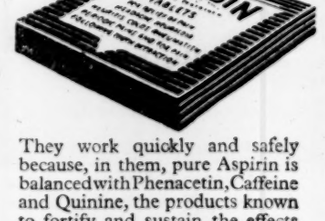

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Appointments Vacant

None of the vacancies in these columns relates to a man between 18 and 50 inclusive or a woman between 18 and 40 inclusive unless he or she is excepted from the provision of the Control of Engagement Order, 1947, or the vacancy is for employment excepted from the provision of that Order.

UNIVERSITY of London. Applics. invited for post of Director of Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, which will become vacant on August 1. In making appointment, due consideration will be given to academic qualifics., admin. exp. and interest in field of adult educ. Salary not less than £1,250 p.a., plus superan. and family allowances. Further partics. supplied on request. Applics., stating age, qualifics., exp., etc., with 2 testims. and names of two referees, to Principal, University of London, Senate House, W.C.1, by Feb. 7.

UNIVERSITY College, Leicester. Applics. invited for Chair of Economics. Sal. £1,200 p.a. Further partics. from Registrar, to whom applics. should be forwarded by Jan. 21.

UNIVERSITY of Durham. King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The Council of King's College invite applics. for post of full-time Staff Tutor to Extra Mural Classes. Salary scale rises by annual increments of £25, to a maximum of £850, and comm. salary of the successful applicant will be fixed at a suitable point on that scale in accordance with his qualifics. and exp. Duties to commence on August 1, 1948. Fifteen copies of application, which should include names of three persons to whom reference may be made, should be sent by Feb. 7 to G. R. Hanson, Registrar of King's College, from whom further partics. may be obtained.

CITY of Liverpool. Appointment of Director of Museums (comprising the following Departments each under a Keeper: Geology, Botany, Vertebrate Zoology, Invertebrate Zoology, Ethnology and Shipping, and Archæology). The Council of the City of Liverpool invite applics. for above appointment at a salary of £1,250 p.a. Age of applicants must not exceed 50 years. Person appointed will be reqd. to devote his whole time to duties of the office, and all emoluments out of public money and fees which may be payable to or received by him will have to be paid to the Corporation. He will also be reqd. to pass a medical examination, and to reside within the City. Appointment will be subject to provisions of Local Govt. Superan. Act, 1937, & Standing Orders of the City Council and will be determinable by 3 calendar months' notice on either side. Form of application, and partics. of duties and conditions of appointment may be obtained from me, and applics., with copies of three recent testimonials, must be addressed to me (endorsed "Director of Museums"), and be recd. on/before Mon. Jan. 26, 1948. Candidates serving in H.M. Forces abroad need not complete official form of applic., but may submit direct applics. within date specified, giving partics. of age, education, qualifics. and exp., and three names as refs. Number of applicant's release group and probable date of release should also be stated. Canvassing of members of City Council, either directly/indirectly, will be a disqualification. Thomas Alker, Town Clerk. Municipal Buildings, Dale St. Liverpool, 2.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of B.B.C. Representative in Mexico City. Max. salary equivalent in United Kingdom £1,230 p.a. Salary paid in Latin America will include an overseas allowance related to the extra cost of living and will be dependent on personal circumstances. An outfit allowance of £50 will be paid, increased to £75 if the Representative is accompanied by his wife. Successful candidate must undergo medical exam., join Overseas Contributory Sickness and Accident Insurance Scheme and be prepared to stay in Latin America for 3 years, as transfer under this period would normally only be considered to meet requirements of the Corporation. Candidates should have good education and cultural background and ability to make and maintain official and other contacts. Knowledge of Spanish and of Latin America essential. Exp. of office management necessary, knowledge of broadcasting and publicity work useful. Applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked "Mexico, N. Stm.," within 7 dys. For ackdgmnt. enclose s.a.e.

COUNTY Borough of Southampton. Health Department. Psychiatric Social Worker. Applics. invited from qualified Psychiatric Social Workers for above appointment, which is to be made in connection with the establishment of a Child Guidance Centre in Southampton on Jan. 1. Sal. will be in accordance with Joint Negotiating Committee Scale of Sal. £370, rising by annual increments of £20 to £530 p.a. Forms of applic. from H. C. Maurice Williams, Medical Officer of Health, Civic Centre, Southampton, to be returned by Jan. 31.

CITY of Bath Educ. Ctee. Bath Academy of Art. Principal, Clifford Ellis. Bath Academy of Art includes Bath School of Art and also, among other activities, a training College for men and women teachers of art in schools of general education. Applics. invited for follg. posts which are to be filled as soon as possible, the salary for each being at Pelham Scale: (1) Lecturer in Art History and Librarian, or alternatively, Lecturer in Art History and Teacher of Drawing; (2) Lecturer (woman) in Dress Design, Weaving and/or other work with textiles. Further partics. and forms of application from the Principal at above address.

Y.W.C.A. Secretary-Leader required New Year, London Club with extension Club. Good programme work; responsibility and initiative. Resident. Salary according to experience. Apply, Personnel Secretary, Y.W.C.A., Great Russell St. W.C.1.

WANTED, Assistant Club Leader (Jewish), age between 30 and 35. Write Box 902, giving particulars of previous experience.

Appointments Vacant—continued

B.B.C. invites applics. from men for post of Film Sound Mechanic in Television Service. Applicants must have a good knowledge of recording amplifiers, film recording cameras, film projectors, dubbing heads, and editing machines, and be able to carry out maintenance repairs. Fixed salary £8 5s. p. wk. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked "Sound Mechanic, N. Stm.," within 7 days. For acknowledgment enclose s.a.e.

THE Labour Party. Applics. invited for post of District Woman Organiser for Wales, to direct organisation of women within the Party, and supervise work of Women's Sections, Advisory Councils, etc. Applic. forms and information about conditions of appointment obtainable from Chief Woman Officer, Labour Party, Transport House, Smith Sq. London, S.W.1, by Jan. 26, 1948.

THE Young Men's Christian Association invite applics. from men between 21-30 of definite Christian exp. and with a desire to serve the Kingdom of God as Secretaries in the Y.M.C.A. Applicants must possess capacity for leadership, an enthusiasm to serve young men and a real sense of Christian vocation. They should have attained Matric. standard or its equiv., be prepared to serve in any part of the country and have had some exp. in work with youth. Application in writing to Secy., Personnel Dept., Natl. Council of Y.M.C.As., 112 Great Russell St. London, W.C.1.

RESIDENTIAL Nursery, Westerham, Kent (approved by Min. of Education) for 20 intelligent maladjusted children aged 2/7, receiving psychiatric and psychological help. Applics. invited for vacancies arising between Jan. 1948 and April 1948, for year's training under direction of Ruth Thomas, Educ. Psychologist. Maintenance allowance of £78 p.a. resident to applicants holding nursing, teaching or nursery qualifics., or with exp. of children. Applics. to be made as soon as possible on forms obtainable from Homes Secy., Natl. Assocn. for Mental Health, 39 Queen Anne St. W.1.

EDUCATIONAL Centres Association invites applic. for post of General Secretary. Applicant must be graduate with wide exp. of Adult Education, administrative ability, some knowledge of finance and accounts, and must be a good public speaker and persuasive advocate of pioneering work. Sal. up to £800 p.a., plus superannuation, according to qualifics. and exp. Letter to Chairman, Educational Centres Association, 8 Endsleigh Gardens, London, W.C.1. Closing date Jan. 31.

APPLICS. invited for the post of organising secretary for about one year for Internat. Congress to be held in London in Sept., 1948. Full exp. in similar work essential. Sal. at rate of not less than £1,000 p.a. Box 1211.

OXFORDSHIRE Education Ctee. Applics. invited for post of Youth Organiser (Woman) on a salary scale of £390 by £15 to £435, plus cost of living bonus £48. Candidates must have appropriate qualifics. and exp., and a car is essential. Post offers useful opportunities for pioneer work since the authority's present arrangements are under review and may be considerably modified. Further partics. and applic. form, which must be returned by Jan. 24, may be obtained from Director of Education, County Offices, Oxford.

BOROUGH of Cambridge.—Ctee. for Education. Further Education and Service of Youth. Applics. invited from men with suitable qualifics. and exp. for the following full-time post: Assistant Leader, Coleridge Youth Centre and Evening Institute. Sal. scale, £345 × £15—£360 p.a. (plus bonus of £59 16s. p.a.). Exp. and qualifics. may be taken into consideration in fixing comm. salary. Further partics. and applic. forms, which should be returned as soon as possible, will be forwarded on receipt of a s.a. foolscap env. T. F. Foreman, Borough Education Officer, Education Offices, The Guildhall, Cambridge.

THE Citizens' Club, Stoke-on-Trent. Applics. invited from men and women for the post of Warden of this Club for young adults. Sal. £250–£300 p.a. according to exp. and qualifics. Post is superannuable. Further partics. and applic. forms from Organising Sec., Council of Social Service, 50 High St. Stoke-on-Trent. Applics. to be sent by Jan. 17.

STEPNEY Pacifist Service Unit has vacancy for Resident Male Case-Worker. Particulars from 6/355, The Highway, E.1.

WANTED immediately, housemaster (Jewish), sal. £275 p.a. rising to £300 by annual increments (£15) and full residential emoluments. Apply in writing Principal, Jewish Orphanage, West Norwood, S.E.27.

A RESIDENT Hostess is reqd. by the Mary Macarthur Holiday Home for Working Women at Stansted, Essex. Usual Matron's duties. Knowledge of catering. Ability to understand and entertain guests helpful. Salary £275 p.a. with full board. Apply with fullest partics. to Box 921.

ASST. Warden (female) reqd. Some exp. organising, cooking an advantage. £3 p.w., board and sleeping accom. Full partics.: Chairman, Management Committee, Grosvenor Citizens Club, Ashburnham Rd., Bedford.

WANTED for girls' boarding and day school (100), a qualified resident teacher for History and Geography up to Higher School Certificate standard. New Burnham scale, superann. scheme. Apply with credentials to "Southlands," Harrow-on-the-Hill.

WANTED immediately, two experienced people, cook and teacher of junior school subjects. Small numbers. J. M. Aitkenhead, Kilquhanity House, Castle Douglas, Scotland.

GOVERNESS wanted accompany English family to Poland early Feb. Girl 8, boy 5. Interview London end of January. Box 1237.

LONDON progr. school needs driver-handyman. Flat available. Box 1352.

Appointments Vacant—continued

LEADING Publishing House is about to appoint an educational representative to call on schools in the Lancashire, Cheshire and Staffordshire region. Applicants should have a good education and be interested in the problem of book supplies to all types of schools. A car is provided and those applying should be between the ages of 25 and 30. Write stating age and exp. to Box B.D., c/o Bartlett's, 31 Museum St. W.C.1.

JEWISH Welfare Organisation reqs.: 1, Manageress fully experienced large-scale Canteen Catering. 2, Competent Secretary-Shorthand-Typist (languages asset). Partics., inc. ref. and sal. reqd. Box 637.

LABOUR M.P. and wife require personal secretary, good speeds, able to drive car, intelligence more important than experience. Apply Box 1399.

FABIAN Colonial Bureau reqs. shorthand typist for interesting and important work. Sal. £4 p.w., 4 weeks holiday a year. One Set. in 4 free. Applics. to Secretary, Fabian Colonial Bureau, 11 Dartmouth St. S.W.1.

FIRST-Class shorthand-typist wanted for telephone work at London office of national daily. Interest in international affairs an advantage. Box 1207.

AUDITOR and financial advisor for small firm. Office accommodation available for own practice. Also Bookkeeper typist, interesting job. R.P.G., 61 Regents Park Rd. N.W.1.

PUBLISHER—the progressive type—has vacancy for young bright intelligent girl. Box 706.

PHOTOGRAPHER requires exempt typist with knowledge of book-keeping to train as secretary. Methodical and reliable person essential. John Vickers, 29B, Belgrave Rd. S.W.1. VIC. 4915.

SHORTHAND-Typists, senior and junior, accurate and with good speeds, wanted immediately for office at London Bridge. Must be well educated but exp. not essential in case of junior applicants. Work varied and interesting. Salary according to age and exp. Apply: Secretary, Institute of Hospital Administrators, Tavistock House N., Tavistock Sq. W.C.1.

JUNIOR Typist (shorthand an advantage, but not essential) with general office experience, wanted immediately by firm of Industrial Consultants. Write, stating partics. and sal. reqd. Box 9985.

MARKET garden and farm. Opportunity for cultured couple. Irish country house. Box 791.

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Scholarships

ABBOTSHOLME School, Derbyshire. Entrance and Scholarship Tests will be held at the School from March 28-31, 1948. Two or three scholarships only are offered this year, value between £45 and £75 per annum. Details may be obtained from the Headmaster's Secretary, Abbotsholme, Rocester, Staffs.

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FOR Sale: Latest 33 "Life's" (International); Lilliput Farm, 120 toys, £3: Zoo with Elephants, £5; New Black Suede Court Shoes, size 5, £3; New Rolleicord, e.r.c., £35; Black Skating Boots, size 5, £5 10s.; Binoculars, £5; Bag of New Golf Clubs, £7 10s.; Dolmetsch Clavichord; good Violin, seen London.

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Send no money or goods in reply to the advertisements, but write first to N.S. & N. Readers' Market, 19 Great Turnstile, mentioning advt. and details (separate letter for each item). Charges under this heading, 2s. first word, 1od. a word after, including forwarding replies.